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THE

Mysterious Florentine.

VOL. III.

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THE

Mysterious Florentine.

A Romance,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY CAROLINE SINCLAIR.

Cast off your veil, mystery;
Show us each ghastly feature;
Pooh! not ghastly—insignificant,
When truth reveals you—such as you are.

VOL. III.

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THE

Mysterious Florentine.

CHAP. XVI.

THE narrative of Caprana for awhile beguiled the sorrow of Alonzo, but nothing could divert the channel of his thoughts, which continually reverted to his misfortunes.

His uncertain fate, the anguish of his mother and Elvira, and the loss of Agatha, all combined to render him miserable.

What must Ernesto suffer? Perhaps that generous friend, a prey to despair, was now wandering in search of him. The amiable duca, doubtless accusing him with carelessness, while the silent regret of the gentle Laurentini would add another pang to the misery of the already afflicted Ernesto. In vain he lamented that incaution which had produced so much mischief.

From Caprana he had nothing to hope—the gloomy prospect of perpetual imprisonment, now with every aggravation presented itself. He sickened at the idea—"Then I am lost indeed!" was his mournful conclusion, after fruitlessly revolving in his mind past events.

"Here shall I end my unfortunate life, the companion of robbers, and indebted to their clemency for the temporary

ease I enjoy—wretched fate to live inglorious, and die unknown."

His deep dejection excited the compassionate sympathy of Nicolo, and for the first time during his captivity, he addressed Alonzo in the soothing accents of friendship. Moved by his despair he ventured to remonstrate.

"Listen to the voice of reason," said he, "and moderate your grief. I require you not to perform impossibilities, neither do I advise you to become insensible. Either indulged to excess, are productive of evil."

Alonzo attended to his words, as much from curiosity as interest. It was the first time of his speaking to him, and he could do no less than pay attention.

"Your apathy," said he, "is as blameable as it is injurious. "If you at the first approach of misfortune, weakly sink under it, what do you think supported me for so many years? Not surely despair! No, that had reduced me to a state of the most pitiable misery. The justice I owe to myself, that fondly cherished principle, which bids me patiently await the avenging moment. Then shall I retaliate and pour that vengeance another has hurled on me; a vengeance doubled, because deprived of my resource—innate rectitude. Call into action the capabilities of your mind; they will teach you your duty—or in other words, teach you how to revenge yourself. For shame thus slavishly to yield! Shall coward nature start because the ill directed blow pierces the bosom of him who had fain inflicted the deadly wound. It

is done, the mental eye with joyful triumph contemplates the blissful sight, sees the whelmed wretch run to each avenue; seek each close covert, and forsaken, perish in the awful gulph.—At the dread scene pity relents, and shrinks appalled, but memory, like the firm centinel, true to his post, repeats in accent loud—this fate the monster had allotted for you. Conviction flashes and gives utterance to those shouts of exultation that wafts the expiring wretch to misery. He that cannot revenge himself is a despicable coward. He must either be not possessed of courage, or constitutionally mean."

"I differ in opinion with you, senor, said Alonzo."

"O, you think,"

"So I think. Would you infer it is only in thought?"

"I am convinced it is so," replied Nicolo. "Bring before you that amiable man—that exalted character who has caused your imprisonment, what would you do to him?"

"You speak in burlesque, senor, or you could not call a villain, the most atrocious, an exalted character."

"Just so—of an enemy we cannot speak with common patience, much less act toward him with clemency.—What would you do to him, I ask? Not surely forgive him."

The question was a close one, and Almanza hesitated. He felt though he had attempted to correct Nicolo, his passions were equally unsubdued. In

spite of self-complacency, he felt that it was much easier to talk of forgiveness than to exercise it; but nevertheless, like too many others, he thought it necessary to support his opinion, and talked loudly of the amiable spirit of forgiveness.

"It is an exquisite sensation for those who can feel it," returned Nicolo; "but that sensation is more calculated to afford pleasure when the sense of injury has in some measure died away."

Alonzo denied this position, and Nicolo smiled at what he asserted he had not the magnanimity to put in execution.

"Fancy yourself," said he, "attacked by a bravo—he strikes, but makes not a mortal infliction. You have also a weapon, how would you act?"

" Defend myself," returned Alonzo.

" Good. It is what I expected; then why shrink from revenge, is it not surely the same?"

Alonzo contended, though similar, there still was a difference, favourable to his hypothesis, inasmuch as the one was an act of self-defence, guided by the impulse of the moment, while the other sprung from deliberate malice, and was unworthy to become cherished in a generous bosom.

" Mercy," said he, " should on all occasions be exercised."

" Yes," replied Nicolo, " so would I, were I the slave of forgetfulness. But shall I, when I feel hot rage high boiling in my veins, play the hypocrite, and say I forgive, because it is praiseworthy so

to do—because the pattern of excellence is set me by yonder man, who, cool-passioned, or of a more pliant temper, feels not the fury that agitates me.—Such mockery is the frolic, the pastime of fools; it befits not a man. Vindictive enough to harbour revenge, let him, I say, have the courage to seek it. You profess, senor, to feel an inclination to forgive your enemies; enjoy the sensation—it is, I own, a peace-inspiring one; but till I feel a similar incitement, expect not I shall act in the like manner. I neither court nor dread the censure of mankind; I have suffered severely from misrepresentation. If you will indulge me with an hour's attention, you shall judge for yourself.

"My father was an Italian comte, a man of an irritable disposition, and easily warped; too hasty to act with consistency, he was the slave of every im-

pulse, and yielded indiscriminately to all.

" Chance or listlessness, I cannot pretend to say which, induced me one day to attend the disposal of a debtor's effects, among which was a portrait of the unfortunate deceased. A something interesting in the cast of the features attracted my notice, and I paused to contemplate it.

" At that instant, a soft sigh stole on my ear. I raised my eyes, and beheld a female figure. I examined her features; they bore a striking resemblance to the picture. But no wonder; the original was her father, and she had attended in order to buy in the picture.

" Her intention was no sooner discovered, than two unthinking young men with whom I was acquainted, be-

gan to humour the joke, as they called it, by outbidding her.

" Their unmanly conduct aroused my indignation, and I remonstrated with them, but to no effect. My feelings were powerfully excited when I beheld the agony that was so strongly depicted on her countenance.

" Doubtless, senor, you will conclude the countenance that interested me, was a beautiful one, but it was not. I pity the man who cannot admire a picture. Because it pourtrays not beauty, is there nothing in the expression—nothing to gratify the feelings of sensibility—and because it is not positively the transcript of beauty, our admiration is to be withheld?—What a decisive proof of bad taste! What a proof of the stoicism of that heart which can resist the powerful pleadings of feminine softness,

though unaccompanied with a lovely, a graceful form! With me the dross of sensibility ever illumined an eye the most dull in nature, and the sigh of compassion gave an inward grace to that bosom which could boast of none external. Could I then remain an uninteresting spectator of the anguish I beheld? Her expressive dark eyes were fixed in the vacancy of despair as she withstood the unfeeling contest, supported by her ungenerous opponents.

"At length she yielded, and had the mortification of hearing them lament their bargain.

"Shocked at their cruelty, I whispered something to them, which so far from producing the desired effect, raised a loud laugh.

"The embarrassed female fixed her

eyes on me with such a look, oh! senor, it was not to be forgotten; it made way to my heart.

"My resolution was fixed, but I chose to keep my own counsel. When less intemperate, I spoke to them about the picture, laughed at their purchase, and easily persuaded them to let me have it.

"Cheerfully I paid the money, and they well pleased at the release, ridiculed me in their turn.

"It was now I executed my design, but, alas! with too much precipitation. Unperceived by the female, I followed her home, and marked her habitation.

"Well pleased, I returned, and calling my servant, ordered him to carry the picture according to the direction,

without saying a word to the young lady.

" He promised obedience, and left me.

" In self-congratulation I passed the day, and felt, senor, the sweetest pleasure I had ever experienced. The consciousness of conferring a favour on another augmented the sensation that conveyed to my mind a felicity not to be purchased—a felicity but short lived.

" Early the next morning my young companions paid me a visit, and rallied me before my father, on the purchase I had made.

" His curiosity was awakened, he demanded an explanation, which I was as well unwilling as unable to give.

" This was what they wanted, and

with the most exultant triumph, they left me to answer the persecuting questions of my father.

"My obstinacy displeased him, and he surveyed me with indignation.

"Almost tempted to reveal the truth, I hesitated, but his repulsive manner deterred me. I could not withstand the inquisition of his eye, and retired from its penetrating glance.

"Just as I was retreating, my attention was suddenly arrested. A servant entered, bearing the before-mentioned picture, and a letter directed to me.

"Scarce knowing what I did, I broke the seal, while my fertile imagination was condemning the false delicacy that had induced the young lady to return the picture.

"In opening the letter, which was enveloped, I found these words." And Nicolo took from his pocket a folded paper. "This memento," said he, "I carefully preserve; it laid the foundation of those miseries that I fear will only terminate with life. But to avoid digression, I will read to you the fatal letter.

"'Must the pleasurable sensations excited by an act that bespoke the generous sympathy of a stranger, be succeeded by the bitter reflection that virtuous poverty can find no friend, unless it is those who wish to deprive her of that name? I have returned your present, and am now suffering from the pang of recollection. When I call to mind the cruel conduct of your friends, who could thus wantonly sport with the feelings of a destitute orphan, who, witness it Heaven, as dear as her life,

wished to preserve the resemblance of a father tenderly beloved. But tell them I feel not my inferiority, and proudly contemn riches, since they alone bestowed on them the privilege of insulting me. Your proposals, with the dignity of innate rectitude, I reject; were I to accept of them, as you urge for the sake of the portrait, the conscious canvass would reproach me. The reduced, disgraced, and low sunken Count de la Tourville could not be the companion of guilt, and I am sorry to add, an unfit associate for Nicolo.'

"Was not this an outrage to my feelings? But I could have acted the very maniac when I read a letter signed and dated in form as coming from me, making proposals that must have shocked the delicacy of the Count de la Tourville's unhappy daughter. The fact was, my behaviour in itself rather singular,

coupled with my following her home, raised the suspicions of my acquaintance, and they in their turn watched me. Portiri immediately suspected my design, and he was the author of the whole mischievous plot, the others declining any further part in the affair.

"When reason came to my aid, I repaired to the habitation of the lady, intending to make her all the reparation in my power; but in this, alas! I was disappointed. Fearing I should persecute her after the spirited letter she wrote, she had prudently removed, but whither, the people where she lived, either could or would not tell.

"Thus was my peace of mind disturbed by the afflicting idea that I had unintentionally forced an unhappy orphan from a comfortable shelter, perhaps to her pecuniary loss.

"This was, senor, the first moment of real sorrow I ever knew. In my despair I sent the perfidious Portiri a challenge.

"He frustrated my design by acquainting my father, and claiming protection; but I could not be satisfied, and called on him the next morning.

"Rushing into his chamber, where I found him alone, I offered for his choice sword or pistol.

"With the most abject submission, he refused, attempted to expostulate, and made many concessions.

"Finding my wrath was not to be placated, he would have called for assistance, had I not prevented him. 'Would I had a cane,' I exclaimed, 'that I might treat you like a coward;

you are unworthy to receive honourable satisfaction.' And making up to him with a desperate effort, I broke the sword over his head.

"In this act, unluckily one half fell, and penetrated his skull, and in almost an instant, was buried in his head.

"Transfixed to the spot, and mute with horror, I witnessed the dreadful catastrophe—a catastrophe that completely involved me in ruin. I reflected with the deepest regret, on a manœuvre often practised by triumphant bravery over pusillanimous cowardice, but here unsuccessfully performed, it had been productive of much evil.

"I immediately called for assistance, and considering my presence hateful to the sight of Portiri's parents, I left the house. But quicker than I could reach

home had the tale, the aggravated tale reached the ears of my father. With the severest maledictions he saluted me, and in the homicide forgot his son.

"It was reported I had with deliberate malice, fell on the unarmed Portiri, and without allowing him to defend himself, had cruelly butchered him.

"'Thou disgrace to my house!' said my enraged father, 'where shall I hide thy wretched head? Justice will pursue you. Dost thou think to elude the vigilance of Portiri's parents? You have murdered their son, and they will demand the life of the murderer!'

"It was in vain I swore by every oath the catastrophe was purely accidental, I was wholly disregarded, and indeed the agony my countenance ex-

pressed seemed to give my assertion of innocence the lie direct. Let no man judge another guilty by his looks, for if ever a wretch was self-condemned, 'twas me.

"Overpowered by the poignancy of my feelings, all attempts at justification fixed but the more indelible to the eyes of my prejudiced father the foul stain of guilt. Without further deliberation he bid me prepare to quit the country till the fate of Portiri was authentically known.

"I made no reply, but stood the spectacle of despair; but when he mentioned Morano, my tutor, as the companinon of my travels, a gleam of pleasure like a ray of light shone athwart my dark and bewildered imagination.

"Immovable in my antipathies, my

predilections were equally as strong, and the word of Morano was the law of my heart, and as a law, so punctually obeyed. His ascendancy over me was complete; I admired his expanded mind, and reverenced almost to adoration, the learning which assumed not that self-important barrier, placed by pedantic science between uncultivated nature.

"Morano was an experienced philosopher, and bore each change of fortune with a fortitude that by some was called insensibility. To the most insignificant of his actions he assigned a motive, and judged of an action more by the effect it produced than the cause that impelled it.

"'Poor youth!' exclaimed he, when made acquainted of the catastrophe by my father; 'the accident is to be deplored, if it happened as he relates.'

" ' 'Tis false, a villain!' he replied; ' I know his ungovernable temper.'

" To learn, if possible, the truth, Morano had sought me. On his approach I raised my tearful eyes, and encountered his; he gave me a look of compassion that penetrated my very soul.

" ' I knew I should meet with sympathy from you,' I exclaimed, wringing his hand, which I bedewed with my tears.

" ' I shall not,' said he, ' bid you restrain your sorrow; it would be telling you to perform an impossibility; let the tide of grief run to its regular channel; these are the tears of unsophisticated youth, your eyes will soon learn social sympathy and bid others weep for them. Men wait for the tide if they wish to embark with safety; the vessel of reason

cannot brave a storm of the passions without certain shipwreck.'

"'Where shall I, a wretched fugitive, go?' said I, addressing him.

"'Wherever your pleasure leads you,' was the reply.

"'Pleasure! how can you talk of pleasure?—It is a stranger to my heart.'

"'So you think,' replied Morano; bring we not exotics to our garden? and shall not pleasure, that foreigner to the human heart, perforce be made to live amicably with the produce of Nature?'

"A summons from my father interrupted him. When he returned he informed me our departure must not be

delayed another moment.—It was not my wish that it should.

"The conversation of Morano could not arouse me from the train of melancholy reflections I had fell into. Deep was my regret, but it was unavailing. If Portiri had indeed fell a victim to my intemperance, I felt I should be wretched for life.

"When more composed I prosecuted with avidity my studies, in the fond hope of finding a resource, but the case was not so; the most alarming dejection depressed my spirits, and rendered me unfit for all enjoyment."

It was the hour for dinner, and much to the dissatisfaction of Alonzo, Nicolo deferred his interesting narrative.

CHAP. XVII.

THE first opportunity that offered, Nicolo resumed the subject.

"I will not weary your patience, senor, by a tedious detail of incidents totally unimportant, but immediately proceed to the principal circumstances that marked my chequered life.

"Weary of seclusion, but more sick of the odium I had undeservedly brought on myself, I resolved to try the efficacy of a change of scene.

"'Where shall we go?' enquired

Morano; 'you will not, surely, venture in your native country?'

"'Why not?' I replied. 'I have committed no crime.'

"He remonstrated, and I agreed to remain where I was, till a letter from my father determined me otherwise. The death of Portiri was hourly expected, and the comte left his castello with the utmost secresy.

"'If he has fled from mere imputation,' said I, with impetuosity, 'it shall not deter me from re-visiting Italy. Let the guilty tremble; self-acquitted I despise the accusations of men. It is at your option, Morano, whether you will accompany me, or no.'

"'Can you entertain a doubt of my [illegible]cence?' said he.

"As soon as possible our departure commenced. We travelled in disguise, and without interruption reached Italy. My spirits, which for awhile had supported me, now seemed entirely fled; Morano exerted his powers to divert my melancholy, and used every assurance to animate me; at length he succeeded, and save a few tormenting thoughts that in spite of all gaiety would obtrude themselves, I was almost happy; the night we passed in all kind of dissipation, and found the day scarce long enough to recruit our exhausted frames.

"At length Morano suggested a new source of amusement, which was gaming; to this he knew I was strongly addicted.

"His proposition was like the fan that rekindles the dormant spark. Our only employ was to seek a house the

most private, and of this description we soon found one, where the votaries of fortune, in ineffectual endeavours to replenish their diminished purses, sink deeper and deeper into the gulph of irremediable ruin. 'Twas too with no small share of satisfaction I heard Morano enumerate the wealth we might so easily and rapidly acquire, for I was wedded to pleasure, and pursued with avidity means that I thought would infallibly procure me the darling object of my wishes.

" Disappointment soon awakened me from my unsubstantial dreams—I lost immense sums. But with better success played Morano—he never lost; which astonished me much.

" Complaining to him of my ill fortune, I determined to tempt the fickle [illegible]dess no more, I observed he looked

chagrined, but interpreted the look in a favourable manner, concluding he was generously concerned at my unsuccessful play.

"'Perhaps,' said he, 'your good intentions are the result of circumstance, and your reformation the work of necessity?'

"'I believe you are right,' I answered, pleased at his friendship.

"That I had lost all the ready money I could then command, truly was the case; and as the time before I could receive the remittances I expected, from the change of our destination, would be necessarily protracted, I accepted the proffered loan, with sanguine hopes of speedily returning it; but still I played the loser, and sorely repented breaking my resolution. When one night that I

had at first refused to accompany Morano, I afterwards joined him: on my entrance a loud clamour ran throughout the room; Morano had been detected cheating a young nobleman, and the company were profusely bestowing kicks on the discovered cheat. Unacquainted with the cause, I flew to his assistance, and with some resentment, found myself involved in his disgrace—I was considered as his accomplice. It was in vain I asserted my innocence, which procured me no protection, till I obtained it by presenting a stiletto, which I swore to plunge into the bosom of the man who should dare to call my honour in question; while I challenged any one individual of the company to single combat.

"With this they appeared satisfied, no doubt contenting themselves in my absence with saying, they would not

degrade themselves by an engagement with a mean despicable wretch like myself. Of this I was well aware; yet, what could I do? I rescued the disgraced Morano, who had been miserably ill treated, and throwing my purse on the table, offered to remunerate the enraged nobleman. At length matters were compromised, and for my interference, obtained the honourable imputation of Morano's accomplice; consequently I could do no less than extricate him, to prevent a discovery.

"Morano returned me thanks for my friendly interference.

"'It is but just,' said I, with an ironical air, 'that I, who have been in part the cause of your misfortune, should sympathise in them.' Alluding to his cheating me; a truth with shame he acknowledged, and the impolitic

phrase I unguardedly made use of, he never forgave, as he afterwards told me, to the hour of his death.

"He feared I had unveiled his character; and felt uneasy, as every man will who thinks his treachery can no longer remain concealed.

"A moment of exultation at the punishment he so justly merited, had betrayed me; this put him in possession of what ought ever to remain secret from the man you wish to keep terms with; though convinced of his knavery, affect to think him honest, and he will, unless he be totally void of feeling, endeavour to verify the opinion entertained of him.

"I dissembled my resentment, and the recovery of Morano found us, to appearance, as good friends as ever, but only to appearance.

"The money I expected arrived, and I began my career afresh, but soon lost my companion.

"No sooner had I paid Morano the sum I owed him, than without ceremony he left me, and no doubt in exculpating himself, accused me to my father. His ingratitude deeply affected me, and the more so, as I was deprived of all society.

"In one of my solitary rambles I encountered an intimate friend of mine, the Marchese di Viralva. To this nobleman I was particularly attached. In spite of my disguise he knew me, and professing himself highly delighted at the meeting, I obtained from him a solemn promise not to mention the discovery he had made.

"On taking leave, he asked me if I

would do him a favour—I enquired its nature; adding, I should be happy to serve him.

"'It is,' he replied, 'to deliver this letter for me; you can have nothing to fear, as your disguise, and the hour, mentioning it, will effectually conceal you from the eye of observation.'

"I pledged my honour to the fulfilment of my promise, and received from him the letter—we parted to meet on the morrow, when I should bring him the expected answer from the Senora Montebino.

"Accordingly at midnight I repaired to her casino; I was privately admitted, and had just presented her with the letter, saying, I awaited her answer, when she shrieked, upon which I turned round, but too late to avoid the poniard

of a man who had come behind me. I would have expostulated, but the keen pangs of several stabs made me think it was time to provide for my safety, if such a step was practicable.

"I perplexed myself to think who could be the author of my sufferings; I had no enemies but the relations of Portiri; Viralva, surely, could not be my enemy.

"The shrieks of the senora brought her attendants, and at once revealed to me the cause of receiving such an ungracious reception.

"'Infamous wretch!' roared Senor Montebino, in a voice almost choked with passion; 'I have at last detected you.' And dragging me to him, said, 'I will see who your paramour is.'

"The fear of my person being dis-

covered in spite of my disguise made me desperate; I could no longer remain passive, but snatching in haste a stiletto from my bosom, I aimed at Montebino, but the pain of my fast-bleeding wounds unnerved my arm; I had lost my usual energy; this he perceived and snatched from my feeble grasp the weapon, which he instantly recognised.

" ' And am I,' said he, ' to owe my dishonour to the murderer of my cousin Portiri ?'

" This was letting me into another secret; I had now nothing to hope— justice would pursue me.

" ' Your accusations are false !' I said, as soon as I could regain my speech, or recover from the state of surprise I was thrown into by the unfortunate coincidence of events. ' Your wife is unknown to me.'

"I then explained the whole.

"'Bold daring villain!' exclaimed he, 'dare your vile aspersing tongue defame the character of the Marchese di Viralva? Perhaps,' continued he, with a sneer, 'you know not that he is my bosom friend, and will reward your foul assertion with the chastisement due to your insolence.'

"'He is the fit companion of a villain!' I replied, with more impetuosity than discretion.

"My ungovernable passion served to convince the senor I was what he took me to be.

"Not allowing for the irritation he must necessarily feel, I expected from him the calm dispassionate conduct of an uninterested individual. Rage almost

deprived me of reason when I heard the senor order his fellows to secure me, till the officers of justice should take me into their custody.

"There was no time to be lost. My situation was truly critical, yet I could think of no expedient by which I might escape the danger that menaced me. At length I sunk on the ground in an apparently lifeless state; a situation the loss of blood had well enabled me to counterfeit.

"The senor in his turn now began to be frightened. Should I die, he might lay under the imputation of murdering me, and all the assertions he could make of his wife's infidelity might be considered as an excuse, a pretext for his butchering me. The letter too, had no name signed; could I but be restored to life, all he thought might be

ll.

"To this effect, he leant over me, in hopes of discovering some signs of life.

"I remained still, and the senor was hopeless. One he sent this way, and one the other, till at length I found myself alone with my enemy.

"This was a moment of glory; I hailed it—it was the moment of revenge. Starting up suddenly as he bent over my body, I seized the stiletto he had taken from me, and did myself ample justice.

"The cries of Montebino brought in his servants, and in the general confusion, I escaped. I cursed mankind, the world, and myself for its dupe.

"With oaths and imprecations I left the place, muttering every step I took, vows of vengeance. I am sure the

people whom I encountered in my way, must have taken me for a maniac, for as such I acted.

"I was pursuing my flight with the utmost speed, when my progress was impeded by several men who forced me on, scarce allowing me time to breathe. Weak, fatigued, and indifferent about the future, I hardly resisted; and indeed had I been so disposed, the loss of blood occasioned by my unstaunched wounds, would have prevented me.

"Without uttering a syllable, they brought me to this melancholy abode, which has been ever since my prison, and I have every reason to fear will so continue till death releases me.

"My wounds were dressed, and in process of time, healed, though that which so cruelly pierced my heart has

defied every soothing power. The perfidy of Viralva, whom I almost loved, affected me more than the sufferings it had produced. How had the indiscretion of a moment, the yielding to the sallies of the passions, deformed a once perfect being! The fact was, as I afterwards heard, that a guilty connection had for years subsisted between Viralva and the senora. Some unguarded looks, and the information of a menial, had partly revealed to Montebino his injury; but he had yet to learn who was its author. He could not suspect his long tried friend Di Viralva, and a moment of intemperate passion had for ever deprived him of the knowledge he wished so much to obtain.

" For a slight failure of his duty, the servant was dismissed, and such an one as even Viralva would have approved of,

hired. This man soon by liberal presents became entirely devoted to Viralva and the senora, but his zeal was to remain under the mask of unwilling and exacted obedience, so that he might become acquainted with the secrets of his master—a trust, from his excellent character, and close attendance on the senor's person, they hoped would be reposed in him, and so it proved.

"The ever watchful eye of jealousy was not to be satisfied with only an imperfect glance; it must still pry, and the result of such watching augured a final interruption to the lovers.

"What was to be done? Viralva protested he could not live an hour if unable to behold his beloved senora; and she in return, called the whole world a dreary waste, if deprived of the only object she ever loved.

At length a stratagem was devised calculated to deceive the already deluded husband. Dangerous diseases require dangerous remedies, and I, unluckily I was the one applied.

" Montebino, when recovered from his wound, in doleful accent communicated to his friend the melancholy discovery he had made.

" Viralva was all astonishment. It could not be; it was a gross imposition, merely invented to disturb his domestic felicity.

" The letter was read; the handwriting afforded no clue, for the wary Viralva had not wrote it himself, foreseeing the investigation that doubtless would be made; but when my name was mentioned, as if awakened out of a trance, this consummate hypocrite ex-

claimed, 'How jealousy can blind the most discerning judgment! I see through the whole artifice.'

"The senor caught at his words with the fond hope of one who near shipwreck, joyfully beholds the smallest relief. How cheering were the words of Viralva when he bid him banish all suspicion of his wife's dishonour! 'My dear friend, I can easily unravel the mystery. 'Tis a plot, an infamous scheme of the abandoned Nicolo; his revenge has instigated him to the hellish device. Not content with almost murdering your cousin, he wishes to sink the ancient name of Portiri in infamy; and in secret triumphs at your delusion.'

"'But by Heaven he shall not,' replied the half-persuaded Montebino. 'This was what he wanted.'

"On receiving the most solemn assurances, nay, oaths of his wife's innocence, he became convinced the whole, as he said, was a fabrication to destroy his domestic peace, in which he was the more confirmed by my never again appearing—an idea of my supposed guilt, which the artful Viralva had put into his head, being secure of my silence, as I dared not demand satisfaction on account of my concealment; but lest I should by any other means discover his treachery, Caprana's men were charged to seize my person—a commission they punctually fulfilled.

"Thus could he injure with impunity, one who had ever been his friend, and one who because he was already involved in calamity, it was his wish to sink still deeper. Remorseless villain! And he, laughing at the credulity of the duped husband, carried on his guilty intercourse

with the senora, and triumphantly too. He was never absent from the casino, suffering not the least abatement of that friendship they injuriously said excited the envy of one who through their means had become a forlorn, unhappy being, deprived of liberty, and cast off from the affection of a father, who, on being made acquainted with the dishonourable tale, publicly renounced me—a renunciation I am persuaded, from the goodness of his heart, he would willingly have revoked on the least application from me. How must his paternal bosom have felt affected by what he considered my stubbornness! But he knew not I was fatally prohibited—knew not my wretched fate.

"Can you wonder, senor, at my despair? Will you now censure the resolution I have taken of being revenged on Viralva?"

Alonzo hardly knew what to reply, and evading the question, said all that the sincerest sympathy could suggest to sooth the perturbed bosom of Nicolo. The relation of his misfortunes had awakened painful remembrance, and all his wounds bled afresh; his injuries, heightened by imagination, deprived him of all composure.

Abruptly quitting Almanza, he betook himself to his usual solitude, and there to the whispering gale renewed his plaint. It was unavailing, and Nicolo knew it, but could not forego the indulgence. Sad melancholy resource, insufficient to calm a wounded mind.

Alonzo sighed as he departed, and catching the contagion, yielded his whole soul to the darkest despair.

CHAP. XVIII.

THE company of Caprana never felt so irksome to Alonzo as it did on the present occasion. The recital of Nicolo had rendered him unfit for such society. A fond association of ideas had, by recalling to his memory past events, brought to his mental view, all those objects dear to him.

The tender theme, with magic power, engaged his rapt fancy in blissful contemplation, till owning the influence of the strong delusion, he almost fancied

them present, and under this impression addressed them. Thought met thought, but awful reality dispelled the charm, leaving Alonzo dissatisfied with the conclusion.

With pleasure he heard the usual hour for retiring, and sought in oblivious sleep, an antidote for care.

His harrassed mind found not the Lethean balm; fearful dreams disturbed his rest, and proved that the children of affliction can enjoy no repose. Busy fancy with her long train of gloomy terrors, assumed dominion over the slumbering senses, invading the peaceful rights of tranquil sleep.

Alonzo, by frightful visions alarmed, started from his uneasy bed. A gleam of light shone athwart his gloomy chamber, rendering darkness visible.

A light cautious step caused his heart to palpitate. "Those dreams," said he, mentally, "were the forerunner of that fate which has now arrived at its climax; my doom is fixed."

A tall majestic figure met the glance of his half-closed eyes. He fearfully raised them to contemplate the stranger. His countenance was exceeding handsome, and each expressive feature begat an interest surpassing that excited by mere external grace.

His bosom throbbed, but fear repressed the impulse, and pursuant to its dictates, he feigned sleep.

The intruder advanced, and the breathings of Alonzo were imperfect.—Might not the murderous sword now be raised? Who should save him? He trembled excessively.

The stranger paused for a moment, elevated the lamp, and attentively surveyed him, but soon his features assumed a different turn.

Uttering an exclamation of surprise, he disappeared, much to the satisfaction of Alonzo, who, freed from the presence of his nocturnal visitor, began to congratulate himself on his lucky escape. The least noise, nevertheless, created fresh terror; his enemy might return, and perform the act from some secret motive delayed. He suffered not sleep to beguile him, and passed the night in watching.

Early he arose, and communicated to Caprana the disturbance he had met with.

He smiled at the relation. "It is one of those freaks in which fancy is

wont to indulge herself, senor, and I had not wondered if she had presented to your imagination some blue-eyed sister of the sky."

"You may credit or discredit my assertion, just as you please," replied Alonzo, somewhat piqued,

"That you really thought so," returned Caprana, "is beyond a doubt; I call not your veracity in question, but unless you can infuse into my mind similar belief, allow me to differ. As you please," delivered in an indifferent tone, put a stop to any further remarks.

Alonzo, not to be dissuaded out of what he knew to be a fact, indulged many unpleasant reflections; he deplored his forlorn situation. His chamber too, so far removed from all communication, deprived him of assistance. Might not

Caprana be in the secret? He shuddered, as this thought divested him of hope. If he continued where he was, he would be exposed to the same intrusion; and should he petition for a removal, his request might not be complied with. But he would hazard the trial, and spoke again to Caprana.

He positively refused, yet assured him with so much confidence that nothing would disturb him, that betrayed his knowledge of the cause of the interruption, and added by the assurance to the fear it was intended to dissipate.

With no small degree of surprise he marked the strange alteration that had taken place in the hitherto sullen Nicolo, and without knowing the reason why, felt interested in the cause. Nothing now remained for him but to exert for-

titude, and as the evil could not be shunned, he was prepared to meet it.

Nicolo, not as usual dejected and desponding, entered into conversation with the utmost gaiety, appeared delighted, and even smiled.

This was indeed a rarity. Caprana could not forbear noticing it.

The senor, as if awakened into a sense of the incaution he had been guilty of, endeavoured to amend it. The effort was vain, for concealed triumph gave to his animated countenance a look sufficiently expressive to contract the scowling brow of suspicion.

"Oh, Heaven!" exclaimed he, when alone with Alonzo, "how this day repays all my former sufferings."

Alonzo, unacquainted with the motive for this exclamation, could not enter into his feelings.

Nicolo observed he had excited his curiosity, and prepared to gratify it; the approaching footsteps of Caprana however prevented him, and apparently disappointed, he said to Almanza, in a hurried manner, "As the justification I wish to make will take some time, allow me to postpone it till to-night; we shall not be subject to interruption. Meet me in my room at twelve, and should you not find me there, which perhaps may be the case, await my return till one. I have a motive for this request; it is my wish to make you my confident, and the cause that requires my attendance shall then be explained."

The entrance of Caprana prevented

Alonzo's reply. He meditated on the words of Nicolo, and longed most ardently for their explanation.

"Ah!" thought he, "the impulse was too true; I am indeed interested. Yes, Nicolo, I will obey the summons. Who knows, he may effect my deliverance," The violent palpitation of his heart confirmed the pleasing idea.

Alonzo ever sanguine, now converted the object of his terror into some secret friend commissioned to deliver him. But why was the act delayed? This objection was immediately overruled, as would every other, by a disposition like Almanza's.

Impatiently he counted the hours; at length the one appointed arrived. Agitated alternately by hope and fear, he obeyed.

On reaching the chamber of Nicolo, he found him absent, as he had hinted.

Not in the least disappointed, he attempted to amuse himself till one. "What an immense hour!" thought he, mentally. "It will surely never end!" Suspense certainly encreased its length, or so it appeared to him.

With a sensation before unfelt, he heard the deep-toned clock strike the wished-for hour—his heart bounded. Already emancipated, he was in the arms of his mother—felt her maternal embrace, returned the affectionate looks of Elvira, and, oh, joy supreme! was restored to his Agatha, Ernesto, and all his friends.

This was the fond work of creative fancy—unsubstantial good! that pleases

for awhile the charmed senses, then adds mockery to real misfortune.

Nicolo appeared not—what could occasion his delay? It was two—it was three, but he came not.

"Am I for ever to be thus duped?" ejaculated Alonzo, in an accent of reproach. "Oh, Nicolo! you have deceived me, perhaps to suit your own purpose; but freely I forgive you: ill treated by mankind, it is but just you should retaliate. Poor sufferer! I am not angry, and if I have been instrumental to your good, most welcome are those pangs disappointment have inflicted."

In silence he reached his chamber; all there was exactly as he had left it. He softly closed the door, undetermined how to act; it was too late to seek

repose, and yet should he not, such a circumstance might excite the suspicion of Caprana, which it was his wish to avoid. Without further deliberation he undressed himself, and contrary to his expectations fell into a profound sleep, out of which he did not awake till a late hour.

Caprana started as if he had beheld a spectre, and several of the men broke out into an immoderate fit of laughter.

Alonzo, unacquainted with the cause of their mirth, felt nevertheless abashed on discovering it was himself that had excited it.

After repeated endeavours to become serious, the men left the room, and Caprana, who had assumed a stern air, seemed lost in thought; his eyes were cast on the ground, as if purposely to

avoid the penerating glance of Alonzo, who regarded him attentively. The merriment that had been indulged, evidently at his expence, displeased him. At a loss to what to attribute it, he was in no humour to bear a renewal.

"Perhaps," thought he, "the idiot surprise I betrayed might have furnished them with a subject; and yet, methinks no common cause could occasion the palpable astonishment of Caprana. Why did he start at my entrance? Why appear so wonder-struck?"

Caprana really was so, and his wonder experienced an increase on being informed the Senor Nicolo was no where to be found. He clenched his fist, and yielding to the most ungovernable passion, swore he was undone.

"Fly, companions, fly," said he, in

a tone descriptive of the confusion of his mind; "let immediate and diligent search be made after the fugitive, if we wish to be preserved; scour the forest, leave no avenue unexplored."

The communication produced the effect of an electric shock.

"Lose no time, loiterers," vociferated Caprana; "but first examine the interior, lest the culprit be somewhere concealed. This the cause of his transport yesterday; methought he was hatching mischief, by some unguarded expressions he let drop. What will ——— say?"

But recollecting Alonzo was within hearing, of whose presence he was before unmindful, he recalled the name.

"Bring back Nicolo, my brave com-

panions, and whether dead or alive, our peace is secure: haste this very moment to intercept his flight."

With vigilance the banditti begun the search, while Alonzo breathed secret and fervent wishes that Nicolo might escape them; and so it proved.

Caprana, nearly distracted, awaited the result with that calm fixed despair, which admits of no alleviation.

Alonzo could not account for the strange conduct of Nicolo. Was his departure premeditated, or did he intend to keep his appointment? Perhaps some impediment might have prevented him, for he saw no reason why he should practice deception.

"I never disturbed him," said he, as he revolved in his mind each incident.

Sullen and gloomy, Caprana refused all consolation. If Nicolo could not be found, he declared the whole band were ruined. General dismay took possession of all his companions; trembling at his predictions they knew not how to act.

Almanza alone indifferent, heeded not their concern; nay, secretly rejoiced. Each change, he hoped, would better his unfortunate lot, and he cared not how soon it happened.

Busied with these thoughts, he tranquilly retired to repose, and awoke no more to captivity! His eyes saluted by the cheerful morn, were cast devoutly to Heaven's blue concave. Heartfelt thanks of gratitude escaped him, while struck with astonishment at his deliverance, he could only wonder within himself at the means by which it was

effected. He knew not where he was; every thing bore the aspect of enchantment, and nearly persuaded him it was so, but for the pleasing reality that soon presented itself, and he ascribed his present good fortune to the friendly zeal of Nicolo.

The lowing of cattle convinced him he was not far from some human habitation. Enlivened by the idea he pursued his way with alacrity, he was no longer a prisoner; the trees had gained new beauties, and the verdure additional charms, the very breeze breathed a purer air; like a bird let loose he hardly knew which direction to take. Had Caprana released him? The thought seemed rational, he spoke of certain ruin should Nicolo escape them, which being the case, it was more than probable that he and the whole band had quitted their rendezvous, and in his sleep removed him.

Grateful for the cause that had produced an effect so desirable, he renewed his speed.

Oh, liberty! thrice welcome to the being that has been deprived of thy blessing; with what unfeigned rapture did Alonzo hail thee! he experienced a joy before unknown. He met a peasant —tears started in his eyes; they were the tears of recollection. And now in thought he embraced his mother, felt the encircling arms of Elvira, received the forgiveness of Agatha, owned himself alone to blame, and next was engaged in answering the interrogatories of Ernesto; not an object that had shared his regard was forgotten in this picture of fancy—a picture that soon became realised.

CHAP. XIX.

ERNESTO, breathing forth the revenge the conduct of Montaldi was calculated to inspire, lost no opportunity that might promote its accomplishment; but baffled in every scheme, he could only with his family deplore the general loss they had sustained. The disconsolate Senor di Bartolo, the image of despair, suffered anguish indescribable; the loss of his daughter, though an event that deprived him of all happiness, seemed not half so poignant, as when he reflected on the partner of her flight; he

beat his breast, tore his hair, and yielding to the paroxisms of grief, acted the very maniac. How altered his looks! his eyes seemed fixed in gloomy vacancy, and sunk in their sockets; his once stately and majestic form, now bending under the weight of affliction, claimed the sigh of sympathy.

The amiable Bartolo had through life been the victim of a settled serene melancholy, which could only receive an additional increase by circumstances of a very afflicting nature; yet he was just, generous, and philanthropic; he could not, however, avoid those casualties that are attendant on human nature; the just distribution of reward or punishment is not to be determined in this lower world, the virtuous here drink the bitter cup of affliction. Under such an idea the draught of Bartolo was privileged, he had drained it to the

very dregs; grief and madness by turns agitated his perturbed bosom—he wildly raved for his loved, his lost Rosalia; would not believe she had left him till the agonized look, the gesture of frenzy, and the sigh of forlorn hope bespoke the sad, the melancholy truth.

"Then she is really gone," exclaimed he, as if not yet convinced of her desertion; "Rosalia, the beloved of my soul, has forsook me."

Divested of reason, with all the contradiction of incoherency, he ordered a horse to be made ready. "Quick as lightning will I follow." A horse was prepared.

"But where shall I go?" exclaimed he, in an agony of woe. "Whither find my unhappy child.—She has not left her father voluntarily. The trai-

torous Montaldi has tore her away.—Ah! perhaps—begone heart-rending thought. My Rosalia, at this very moment, calls, and calls in vain on a father ever ready to anticipate her every wish."

The weeping, afflicted Laurentini besought him to be calm.

Ernesto entreated, and the duca remonstrated; attempting to sooth him, by whispering the reviving hope that Rosalia might yet be restored.

This was indeed offering the most effectual balm to his wounded mind, he regarded them with a look of dejection.

"Great God!" he exclaimed, with fervour, "since it has pleased thine unerring wisdom thus to afflict me, enable

me to bear my loss with composure; suffer me not to sink beneath its pressure."

He could not proceed, the interesting group that surrrounded him overpowered his feelings, and was the best preserver of his nearly departing senses: fond reason, struggling to maintain dominion, at length succeeded; calm he beheld the setting sun, calm he beheld obscuring night, and resigned witnessed the return of morning, though it brought not Rosalia, though the disappointed vassals returned without the least tidings, and Ernesto, the saddest of the sad, also proved unsuccessful.

Night after night did he, a cheerless wanderer, pace the gloomy forest, as well to seek Alonzo as to discover Montaldi, whom still he imagined frequented that spot.

Laurentini occupied by the same object, passed the long tedious night in thinking of the perfidious Montaldi; he had forfeited all claims to her esteem, and was only remembered as a being whose memory had once been dear to her. She sighed as with self-reproach she accused her heart of blameable partiality; she blushed at conduct so culpable.

"The rival of my brother! the destroyer of my cousin's peace!—can I love such a being? Cease, deceitful whisperings; glow no more my bosom, with a passion so ignoble—term too soft for conduct like mine. Can I forget the anguish of my uncle, the venerable Bartolo? Can I respect the author of his misfortunes? Yes, Montaldi, this moment I resign you." Then recollecting herself she exclaimed, "Why this renunciation, is he not the husband of

Rosalia? Of that Rosalia who for his sake has forsook her relations, resigned them without a sigh." She paused—"Yet, Rosalia, I may injure you; who can tell your feelings—describe the sensation that perhaps rived your heart when committing an act to which you was urged through love? Severe indeed must have been your internal agony. Return, dear girl, and share my affection, for I feel I could forgive you—forgive you did I say?—aye, love you as well as ever. If you shed one solitary tear of regret, may that single drop of sensibility cancel all your errors. The act once performed, condemnation is pronounced, and he or she thus found guilty receive the harsh sentence without the least abatement of rigour for that contrition, which of itself is sufficient to atone for the crime; return then, Rosalia! But she hears me not; and would she listen? Yes, she would.

I will not, like the censorious, attach to one false step, every other vice."

She clasped her hands; the theme was too tender, and her heart, already softened, became quite subdued.

Donna Almanza hearing no favourable account of her son, resolved once more to visit the pallazzo, her maternal bosom cheered with the fond hope that she yet might find her son. Elvira and Agatha were her companions; the former she could not refuse, and the latter pleaded with so much eloquence that at length she consented, though much against her will, for she knew her to be ill fitted for such an undertaking.

"Her angelic softness cannot support the keen blast of disappointment, and she will sink beneath its weight," said she to Rameraz, whom she en-

treated to dissuade his daughter from her design.

The senor advised with her, expostulated, and finding her determination already fixed, with his usual good humour, said, "Go my daughter, and may your expectations become realized."

Unlike the donna, he foresaw not the evils she apprehended; well skilled in the human passions he knew that when the mind is diverted, it is prevented from dwelling on any particular object. "And if ultimately," said he, "she is disappointed, she will at least enjoy a temporary suspension."

Agatha, with his consent, accordingly departed. Arrived at the pallazzo, the high-raised hopes of the donna met with a most cruel check.

"He is lost to me for ever!" said she, with an emphatic pause.

Enquiring for Rosalia, she received the afflicting intelligence of her departure.

Agatha, almost heart-broken, accepted with gratitude the friendly attention of Laurentini, and mingled her tears with hers.

Elvira, engaged in struggling with her feelings, assumed a cheerfulness she could not feel, for the fate of Alonzo was never absent from her memory, and her regret for a brother so tenderly beloved amounted almost to madness.

The duca offered every consolation in his power to sooth the afflicted mourners, and charmed them with his engaging hospitality. The extraordinary

disappearance of Alonzo had astonished him much, but as it was an event which nothing but time could elucidate, he awaited the result with patience.

Endeavouring, as much as in his power laid, to divert the melancholy of the donna, he engaged parties, invented amusements, and left untried no means by which he could restore the peace of mind of his guests.

It was one evening while gracing the festive board, and inviting by his cheerful smiles his friends to partake of the repast prepared for them, their hilarity was disturbed by the loud and unusual sounding of the horn, and immediately Fillipo acquainted Ernesto, a stranger wished to speak with him.

"Let him send in his message," said the duca, with some degree of alarm,

while the impetuous Almerini, ready to obey the summons, was inwardly censuring the caution of his father.

"It is some stranger in distress," said he in a persuasive accent; "why the necessity of questioning him?"

Fillipo, who stopped not to hear this remark, but following the directions of the duca, had already returned to the stranger, and repeated to him the message.

"At first," said Fillipo, "he looked disappointed, but recollecting himself, 'It is no more than I expected, their prudence is commendable, but tell the marchese, I bring him intelligence from the Senor Almanza—he will see me, I am persuaded.'"

Ernesto heard no more, but followed immediately.

"I suspect treachery," said the duca, and hesitated not, but pursued his son.

The donna, Elvira, and Agatha felt indescribable sensations; the name of Alonzo had excited the most blissful emotions, hope and fear alternately agitated them, and with the utmost expectation they awaited the interesting sequel.

The duca and Ernesto had been gone some time, their friends began to feel anxious, but their fears became dissipated very soon; the duca, with a cheered countenance, returned; all eyes were immediately directed toward him, eager for the glad tidings they anticipated by his looks, not a moment did he delay imparting the joyful news. Alonzo was well, and not far distant; and had by his friend, the present messenger, prepared them for his arrival,

which he hoped would take place in a day or two.

The donna uttered an exclamation of joy, clasped her hands, and yielded her whole soul to maternal transport.

Elvira in an ecstacy, expressed by her actions what she felt.

Agatha, the blushing Agatha could hardly conceal the delight she experienced. Was it delusion, or would her beloved Alonzo in reality be restored to her? No; such bliss was too great. And again she sunk into her usual depression of spirits; but the lively air, and flushed cheek of Ernesto, who soon rejoined them, convinced her the hopes she had entertained were not erroneous.

Almerini rejoiced, discoursed with that gaiety and pleasantry which bespoke

a heart devoid of care. The knowledge that Almanza was in perfect safety, relieved his mind of a vast burthen—self-accusation removed, his lost serenity became restored; and in conviviality the night was passed. The diffusive smile of peace animated his countenance, and gave interest to each speaking feature.

The thoughts of the donna were such as precluded sleep, tumultuous pleasure, like violent grief, producing the same effect.

At an early hour, the whole happy party assembled at breakfast, where they found the long estranged Alonzo, who was no other than the welcome messenger, considerately so called by Ernesto, lest the sudden surprise should overpower the donna and other objects equally as dear. What a meeting took place!

Alonzo immediately on regaining his liberty, pursued with the utmost speed, the road that lay before him, unacquainted, however, whether he was right or wrong. Meeting with a peasant, of him he enquired the way, and soon, to his unexpected pleasure, beheld the pallazzo, as the moon's silver beams played around its lofty walls, rendering it at once a blaze of splendour.

Prudence dictated the message he sent, and his discretion was rewarded by a pleasing addition, the sight of the venerable duca, who, with parental solicitude, had followed his son.

Of his delivery Almanza could only speak with that rapture which bespoke him grateful for its blessing, while he remained ignorant of the cause or the means by which it was effected.

"You will be more discreet for the future I trust," said his mother, tears of maternal tenderness glistening as she spoke.

Alonzo was unable to reply, inward conviction pronouncing him guilty of more than imprudence, for his eyes inadvertently rested on the blushing Agatha. "And will she forgive my suspicion?—Impossible! she must despise me;" and he became thoughtful.

His friends marked the quick transition, and partly divined the cause; but if a doubt remained to cloud his present cheerful prospect, it became instantly removed by the frank and undisguised manner of Agatha, who, acquainted with the cause, readily forgave the effect it produced on her lover, and on that account considered him less culpable than he could be brought to

think himself. It was not by overacted delicacy she wished to prove the strength of her attachment or his constancy. She candidly allowed that the imposition practised upon him was calculated to make an impression on almost a sceptic. "And I could not expect greater forbearance in my Alonzo," said she, sweetly smiling, and extending to him her hand, in token of that forgiveness which her lips not only pronounced, but her heart cordially assented to.

Almanza could not so easily pardon himself; his conduct, on a revisal, appeared the more blameable. His only consolation he derived from the consideration that the sorrow it occasioned was unintentional, and owed its origin to the secret machinations of some powerful enemy.

How sweet is the indulgence of fond

sensibility, as it enables us to retrace with the salutary tear of recollection, those ills that have passed away, to be remembered no more, save by a lively sensation of gratitude! With such as took possession of the bosom of Alonzo, he contemplated the beings that surrounded him—bestowed on them a look so fraught with meaning that it defied the power of language to describe. The feelings spoke, the heart conversed, thought met thought, and by secret communication imparted the unuttered sentence. This was a moment—a moment of mental bliss.

Swift as the thought that dictated, flew the news that imparted to Don Rameraz a similar joy.

The welcome invitation he instantly accepted, and delighted, found himself at the pallazzo.

Ernesto, who would not let his own individual sorrow cast a gloom on the present happy scene, nevertheless suffered pangs severe. The idea of Rosalia, her desertion, and extraordinary conduct, tormented him continually. Rage excited by the insolence of Montaldi, had now become converted into a passion less turbulent; and with the fixed dejection of settled despair, he calmly witnessed the flight of time which brought to him no alleviation.

Laurentini, who had hitherto been his constant companion, appeared to avoid him, and took no part in his conversation. How could she? He talked of Montaldi; his perfidy was his continual theme. Laurentini could not join in the invective; by a strange perverseness of destiny, Montaldi seemed interwoven with her very existence, and in spite of appearance, she would not believe him

guilty—that his fate was involved in mystery was beyond a doubt. Reason, under the dominion of love, acquitted him, and self-satisfied, she found no difficulty in restoring the unhappy Vincent to her good opinion. It was a mere simple act of justice, at least, so would she have persuaded herself; but a something within, if attended to, had undeceived her at once.

The delusion was too pleasing; Laurentini could not willingly dispel it. Memory, tenacious of her right, whispered the name of Rosalia.

Laurentini started—she listened; it was the accent of truth. Could she disregard it?—Impossible!

Away flew those unsubstantial visions, and left her not one single resource. Montaldi united to another, was an object

whom she ought to strive to forget—to think of him was but increasing her anguish. And yet who can dictate to the passions? Who shall dare pronounce the conduct of Laurentini culpable? If such there are, tell them they have never loved, never loved with her fervour. To restrain the flame she felt was not within the bounds prescribed by reason; her knowledge that it was hopeless, could not tend to lessen it. On the contrary, that proneness ever to be found in mankind, teaching them to pant after that which is unattainable, was the sole cause of her ceaseless regret. She mourned for the loss of Montaldi, whose supposed virtues imagination increased till they arrived at such an height that it would have been insensibility not to respect them. Laurentini therefore easily found an excuse to offer to herself. The departure of Rosalia she by far considered the greatest misfortune. Deprived of

her society, every amusement appeared insipid; each favourite spot, as so many vestiges, continually reminded her of the object who alone had rendered them agreeable.

CHAP. XX.

ROSALIA, on the night of her meeting with Montaldi, had just bid him farewell, and listened to his departing footsteps, when instantly she found herself in the arms of a man.

She struggled to disengage herself from his strong hold, but to no effect; he held fast her hands, and muffled her mouth to prevent those cries she was on the point of making.

Several others joined him, and conducted the almost insensible Rosalia to

the place of destination. It was a rude cottage, remotely situated from all other human habitations.

Rosalia surveyed with secret horror, the world of waters by which it was encompassed, excluding hope, and depriving her of that assistance her distress might claim.

In sullen silence she was conveyed to a small ill-furnished room, but such as the wretched appearance of the miserable cottage led her to expect.

Her savage companions spoke not, but examining that all was secure, left her, as she hoped, alone to indulge the sorrow her melancholy fate excited.

A flood of tears relieved her full heart, and lessened, if possible, her sufferings.

The sudden opening of the door disappointed her expectations. A woman entered, and regarded her with scrutiny.

Rosalia felt abashed as she withdrew from the rude glance, but she had mistook its meaning; it was not as she thought, dictated by that freedom the low-minded ever indulge when invested with imaginary power—it partook of blended curiosity, and an inclination to serve.

She contemplated with secret satisfaction the respectable personage before her. She had passed the meridian of life—a life unmarked by any striking incident, for Josepha moved in humble mediocrity; servitude her inheritance, her well regulated wishes had never been taught to stray—Nature intuitive, marked out the difference between good and bad, right and wrong, and Josepha

undeviating, paid a faithful observance.

She respectfully enquired if Rosalia wished for any refreshment.

Her voice was that which pity, unaided by polish, spontaneously gives to her children, and Rosalia replied in suitable terms.

She attempted to draw Josepha into conversation, but found her reserved, and though greatly disappointed, could not but admire the nice distinction her unadulterated heart was capable of making between compassion and a betrayal of her employer. The former was an act self-impelled, the latter glanced at her integrity; and she who for any consideration abuses confidence, is unworthy of trust. She had sworn fidelity, and would not willingly forswear

herself. The poor and dependant, though often compelled from poverty to yield to unpleasant compliances, cannot be considered partners in the guilt of their superiors. The state of vassalage enforces implicit obedience, and if not a voluntary act, compulsion produces the same effect. They are but the humble instruments of power; and as the vessel that contains water cannot be said to possess the fountain's qualities, so are they exempt from that censure which the titled delinquent often escapes.

Rosalia, delighted to find the voice of humanity was not quite extinct, ejaculated pious thanks to the Giver of all good for her preservation.

She heard with pleasing satisfaction the dashing of the oars, and concluded her terrific conductors had departed. She forbore questioning Josepha, and

calmly resigned herself to her destiny, whatever that destiny might be.

Night's sable banner concealed all objects from her view, and proclaimed it was the hour of repose. "Of that repose I cannot enjoy," said she, mentally, as thought, distracting thought, crowded on her imagination. For what purpose had she been secretly conveyed from her relations—her father too?

Here she stopped; a deadly paleness overspread her beautiful features, and alarmed Josepha for her safety. Tottering back a few paces, the supporting arms of the good woman saved her from falling.

With difficulty she revived.

"You are fatigued, senora," said Josepha. "Pray seek repose."

Rosalia feeling herself very weak, consented; upon which Josepha opened a door of communication, and shewed her into a room where there were two beds.

"And am I," thought the fair unfortunate, "to be denied the solitary consolation of venting forth my sorrow unrestrained?"

She cast her eyes around the room; it was yet more wretched than the one she had quitted. Stifling a rising sigh, she with composure undressed herself.

The dismal noise of the night bird invaded her retirement, and added sadness to the melancholy scene; the shrill whistling of the wind, as it agitated the troubled waters, caused a sound the most disagreeable. She reflected on her forlorn situation, alienated from her re-

lations, and to appearance, for ever excluded from relief. In vain she invoked the fleeting guest of the unhappy to end the vigils of busy memory, which brought a painful retrospect of those sylvan scenes of delight in which her infancy happily glided. What a contrast to the present! Her father—the unhappy Ernesto, deceived into a belief of her unworthiness.—"He must surely—does despise me! even accuses the unfortunate Montaldi, being pursued by malignant fate, when will you escape the unjust persecution that attends you? Each action misconstrued, affixed to your name the stain of unmerited guilt. Some enemy, determined I should not justify you to Ernesto, has devised this scheme to counteract the design, and I the victim of vengeance; that becomes lessened by the consideration it is in your cause I suffer. Generous Montaldi, you once restored me to liberty;

I could not return the act—fate it seems prohibited me, but I will teach this refractory heart submission—bear with composure my doom."

A soft tear coursed down her cheek, and produced the most salutary effect; it lightened her bosom, and tranquillized, her weary limbs found in balmy sleep renovation.

She kindly answered the feeling enquiries of Josepha, and congratulated herself that she was blessed with such a companion; and assured of her goodwill, felt as much gratitude as if Josepha had actually restored her to liberty.

Virtue consists in the motive, in the spring of the mind, the stimula to action—not in the mere deed, which is only the effect—not the cause, the sha-

dow—not the substance. Is not the will, the deed? The former, like all other shadowy reflections, could have found no existence but from the substance. A generous action achieved in the mind, stands registered in the heavenly record, as if actually performed, and though the integrity of Josepha was not to be corrupted, Rosalia bore her no ill-will. It is true, from this circumstance, her hopes of relief diminished, and filled her with additional despair. All possibility of escape seemed precluded; she knew not the situation of the cottage, neither could she tell to a certainty, whether herself and Josepha were the only inhabitants it contained; she often heard the sound of voices, but it might be Josepha conversing with the people whom she said brought their provision. She had not beheld another human creature since her confinement. And could she elude the vigilance of

Josepha, whither could she fly? Who would shelter her?

Thrown into the utmost perplexity by this consideration, day succeeded day, and brought no alleviation.

"My doom is fixed," she said, as mournfully one night she retired to rest. For ever estranged from my relations, in this solitary confinement, I shall end my unhappy life, while they perhaps are censuring me, unconscious of the pangs that rive this heart. Ernesto, loved youth, must I no more behold you, no more hear your soothing accent? Could I but exculpate myself, convinced you forgave me, I would call my fate less severe. Circumstance, 'tis true, conspired to make you think me guilty; and to add a darker shade to the supposed offence, Montaldi, the guiltless Montaldi, is consi-

dered the partner of my flight. Oh! Heaven grant he may escape your vengeance. Mistake not, dear youth, his firm denial for mean prevarication. Montaldi is incapable of such an act; believe him, as he is devoid of guile. But Ernesto hears not my voice; by rage infuriated, seeks out the unhappy Vincent—they fight—he falls. Merciful Father, forbid the thought!"

Shuddering at the terrible idea, Rosalia made a fearful pause. In that pause she heard a deep groan, seemingly near her.

She listened—the sound was renewed with yet more solemnity. Her limbs stiffened with horror, and her chained tongue refused to articulate.

All was silence, and her spirits began to revive. "It was the vision of the

night," said she, mentally, as she endeavoured to compose herself to sleep.

Vain effort, no rest could she find till toward morning. At a late hour she awoke, and calling to Josepha, received no answer.

A dreadful apprehension took possession of her; the groans she heard might be hers—and so it proved.

Josepha, a cold and breathless corpse, saluted her eyes. A universal trembling shook her whole frame. She took her hand, it was cold and densed.

Rosalia sighed as bereft of hope she surveyed her eyes fixed, and each fallen feature wearing the ghastly hue of death.

Regardless of the danger she might

incur, she boldly opened the door with an intention of claiming the assistance of whoever she might meet, but no one answered her repeated calls. Convinced that she was alone, she returned to Josepha, and once more used ineffectual endeavours to restore that which was for ever lost—the life of Josepha.

That worthy creature had expired in the night; the groans that alarmed Rosalia were hers.

"What shall I do in this dreary situation? How obtain interment for that excellent creature?" said Rosalia, as her eyes rested on the corpse.

These were the questions she mentally put to herself, and to effect her benevolent intention she thought of what, to procure her own liberty, had never suggested itself—the key of the

cottage door. She searched very diligently in every place without finding the object of her search; at length she recollected it was most probable Josepha had it in her pocket. With a palpitating heart she renewed the search, and found it just in time to answer a loud knock which she heard at the door. It was the man who usually brought provision. To him, without reserve, Rosalia communicated the death of Josepha, and enquired of him where she could obtain assistance.

"Not very far," he replied, "if you like, senora, I will row you across in my gondola."

Rosalia, yielding to the soft impulse that influenced her, without hesitation complied, and in her haste forgot to look the door, a neglect the gondolier

informed her was unimportant, from the deserted situation of the cottage.

Her fears satisfied, he rowed with the utmost speed, to gratify, as he said, her wishes, but in fact to forward his own avaricious schemes, for landing Rosalia on the opposite side, he left her, and immediately proceeded to rob the cottage of all it contained.

In this forlorn condition she knew not what to do, and could only lament her unfortunate credulity. Weak and fatigued she walked on as fast as her little remaining strength would permit.

She had wandered a considerable distance without discovering one solitary dwelling, and began to yield to despair as the gloomy prospect of perishing for want presented itself. She had not tasted a morsel, and hunger, added to

the fatigue she endured, completely overpowered her.

At that instant she caught a distant view of a female leaning on the arm of another.

Revived at the sight, she arose and followed them as quick as her feeble limbs would enable her. Their pace was quick; she could not keep up with them, and bursting into a flood of tears occasioned by disappointment, she gave up the pursuit; hope buoyant, had fled her expectations; she could not support the reverse.

Once more she beheld the same objects; they heard her voice and attended to her address.

Senora Pedro, beguiled by the peculiar beauty of the weather, accompanied

by her attendant, had unconsciously wandered near the spot where stood the unfortunate Rosalia; her appearance struck them, and the senora could not forbear expressing astonishment; it was an unusual sight to see a female in a place so unfrequented, and she naturally concluded some unforeseen event had thus exposed the object whom she felt every inclination to serve.

Rosalia, unable to satisfy her laudable curiosity, leant on the arm courteously offered her, and by her kind conductress was conveyed to an elegant villa, where refreshment and repose, which was immediately recommended, perfectly restored her, and in the evening she related the accident which had made her a debtor to that hospitality she gracefully acknowledged.

Proper people were sent by the

Senora Pedro to the cottage, but Josepha, the object of their search, had been removed, and much to the regret of Rosalia, her benevolent wishes remained ungratified.

Serenity once more reigned the inmate of her bosom, and directed her thoughts toward that home the senora informed her she was not so far from as she had imagined.

This intelligence imparted to Rosalia the most heartfelt satisfaction—she would shortly be restored to her father, behold Ernesto, and embrace her beloved Laurentini. She sighed; the bosom of the senora heaved responsive.

Rosalia contemplated her interesting countenance with fixed attention, which she observed, and smiling said, "I perceive I have excited your curiosity, pro-

bably by the sigh to which I gave utterance; you wonder at its origin."

Rosalia blushed, the senora had rightly divined her thoughts; she hesitated, at a loss for an answer which she was spared making by the senora, who said, "Though I should lose your good opinion by the disclosure truth compels me to make, it shall not prevent me from relating what will prove that the indulgence of any particular passion is productive of serious evil.

CHAP. XXI.

"My father, Don Pedro, was possessed of immense treasure, and what ought to have repressed the wish of accumulation served to encrease it.

"Never happy but when contemplating his hoards, he endeavoured to inculcate in me a similar passion.

"Young, irresolute, and not proof against the odium he had brought upon himself, I but feebly imitated his example. At length by the united force of flattery and caresses, I became such

as he wished me to be. He was my only surviving parent, having lost my mother at an age too tender to justly estimate her worth.

"She was a most amiable woman, and had she lived, would doubtless have counteracted the bad effects of my father's precepts.

"He taught me that in riches alone enjoyment could be found; he represented the whole world as moving in subservience: each finer feeling he ascribed to cold interest, and described mankind as so many selfish beings, whom nothing but gain could stimulate. Gold he called the well-disguising mantle that conceals all deformity. I listened, and approved. Oh! who that ever knew his cares would be a miser?

"At that period my heart became

sensibly affected by the impression made on it by the son of Don Rhinaldo de Isidor; I must confess, struck by the interesting manners of that amiable young man, I had overlooked fortune; but how much more was I delighted to find him not only wealthy, but possessed of rank. I thus obtained the consent of a father I tenderly loved.

"On being made acquainted with my attachment his first enquiry related to the possessions of my lover. Satisfied on that (to him) important subject, he gave his approval, and every thing seemed to conspire to forward my wishes.

"An unfortunate animosity subsisted between Don de Isidor and some of his wife's relations, which terminated not only in his own ruin, but that of his son. Condemned to death as a heretic, his

estates became confiscated, and the unoffending Rhinaldo condemned to poverty and misery, which I, so far from alleviating, encreased."

The blush of conscious shame tinged the pale cheek of the senora, and with a faltering voice she proceeded—

"After his misfortunes, by the advice of my father, I discarded the unhappy Rhinaldo, and so totally steeled my heart against him, that not long after I was on the eve of marriage with a French gentleman, whose only recommendation was his fortune, for I blush to own I loved him not; the intended union was however prevented by Rhinaldo, who, soured by misfortune and undeserved neglect, had assumed the name of Orsino, and commenced robber. He and his companions robbed my father to a large amount, and bore

me away to their rendezvous, where, in spite of tears, threats, and entreaties, I was made the wife of Orsino. At first I was irreconcileable, but finding regret of no avail, I became resigned, or at least so to appearance.

"Completely deceived, Orsino suspected not my intentions, and left me to myself.

"Some time after our union, he was engaged in one of those exploits which disgraced his once unsullied name; the enterprize was dangerous and required a more than ordinary number of men. The expected booty was too great to be disregarded, and Orsino, attended by the whole band, sallied forth.

"In their absence I effected my escape, and after innumerable hardships, owing to my defenceless state, reached

my father in safety—he was overjoyed to see me.

"The sudden and unexpected pleasure proved fatal to him; he died, I may say, through the instrumentality of that Orsino whom he and his guilty daughter combined to impoverish. Had he generously shared with him his fortune, he had not thus been deprived of what he could not enjoy.

"To me now the whole world appeared as a desert, I quitted my native country, and have fixed my unsocial abode in this sequestered spot, where secluded from the world, and self-denied the luxuries of life, I deplore that early propensity for gold, which induced me to act in a manner that ever will be remembered by me with shame; the drops of contrition have moistened my pillow, the sigh of regret has heaved

my bosom, but cannot restore peace to my heart, that heart which still throbs for Orsino; but its tenderness feels repressed when I reflect on his disgraceful vocation. Never, never can I acknowledge him. Be his dishonour my punishment, as it is; for it occassions the distracting reflection that but for my unkindness he had nobly struggled with destiny. By me impelled to disgrace I have not fortitude to share.

"Oh, much injured Orsino, accept the only recompense I can make; the publishing of my cruelty to you, strangers shall despise me, but can aught increase the self-reproach I hourly inflict?"

She ceased speaking, and abruptly retired, promising to be ready at an early hour to accompany Rosalia home, her friendly solicitude not leaving to

her attendants what she thought herself the most capable of. Rosalia had already encountered many dangers, and she feared if travelling alone, she might be exposed to more. Strongly interested in favour of her guest, she almost deplored that their separation would take place so soon, but she banished the selfish regret.

Rosalia forbore mentioning the knowledge she had of Orsino; nay, to speak of him she considered a breach of confidence. To him she owed her liberty; should she divulge what perhaps he wished to remain a secret?

"At least," said Rosalia, "it can answer no good purpose; it may add to the remorse of the senora, but cannot, I am persuaded, lessen her compunction. Orsino is deserving of a better fate. He also released Montaldi—the

recollection enhances the debt I owe him, and binds me for ever his debtor."

The senora at an early hour, according to appointment, had prepared every thing for their departure, and Rosalia, with a bounding heart, got into the vehicle that was to conduct her to all she held dear in life.

Within sight of the pallazzo, she caught an imperfect glimpse of Ernesto; the sight had near overpowered her. He was slowly walking with measured pace, his pensive look affected her, she could not refrain from weeping. Her emotion called forth the sympathy of Donna Pedro.

Ernesto accidentally turned his head; he beheld Rosalia. Rivetted to the spot, he yielded to surprise and joy, both of which operated so powerful

that he was unable to speak. Rosalia, who had alighted, in a tremulous accent pronounced his name; her voice, like electricity, thrilled throughout his whole frame.

The senora, a delighted spectator of this interesting scene, claimed the attention of Almerini. Who could she be?

A fearful apprehension now damped his ardent hopes; Rosalia the wife of Montaldi, was accompanied perhaps by his relation. He recoiled from the thought, and together they entered the pallazzo, though much against the inclination of the senora, who, fulfilling her intention, wished to depart, but her objections were overruled by Rosalia and Ernesto, the latter in some degree influenced by those suspicions he was not yet totally divested of.

The Senor di Bartolo, on beholding his beloved daughter, clasped her in his arms, and had she required forgiveness, no offence would have prevented him from pronouncing it, for all the father kindled in his bosom; but Rosalia was as he had ever believed her—guiltless; her innocence and that of Montaldi, which she now clearly proved, tinged the cheek of Ernesto with the glow of shame; Laurentini too felt confused, for like her brother, she had wrongfully accused that injured being.

Self-condemned, Almerini listened to the letter which Rosalia read; that fatal letter which had caused him so much uneasiness. It was addressed to himself, and contained an ample apology for the breach in good manners, fate compelled the unfortunate Montaldi to make; he pathetically described the violence done to his feelings when circum-

[illegible] obliged him not to return the [illegible]ation of Ernesto.

His words no longer considered through the medium of prejudice, bore a plain interpretation, which Ernesto was at no loss in giving; the answers of Rosalia he now viewed in a proper light, they were not, as he then supposed, dictated by love, but merely the result of that gratitude, which had she not felt, even he had despised her.

On the first discovery he made of the meeting of Rosalia and Montaldi, it was but natural that he should feel surprised, and the more so, as Montaldi had treated him so uncourteous; curiosity got the better of honour, and Ernesto meanly listened, he heard what filled him with the deepest anguish, he heard Montaldi breathing a language, which, [illegible]as unintelligible to him, he

ascribed to love; to encrease his suspicions, the first words of Rosalia were lost in the gale, the reply of Montaldi alone he heard, and when he alluded to a state of captivity, the quick ear of jealousy misconstrued his meaning.

When Rosalia expressed a wish to serve him, by becoming the bearer of a letter to Ernesto, could he do less than acknowledge her condescension? He spoke of the interest excited in her bosom, but it was not the interest of love; it was that yet more powerful, of gratitude, gratitude which the remembrance of the essential service he had rendered her, served to perpetuate.

Montaldi, conscious of his own innocence, and guided by his usual impetuosity, could not forbear animadverting on the contemptuous looks of Ernesto; hence arose that ill-timed

complaint, which nothing but a painful revival of his misfortunes could have extorted. And has recollection awakened the keen pang? The thought struck him that it was near the hour on which he had met Almerini, he wished not for the meeting, and expressed his repugnance to Rosalia. She on her part equally averse, though from a different motive, replied in these memorable words—"Nor I; it would spoil the little artifice I have practised, and unravel the whole:"—namely, the secresy she had used toward her family, and even Laurentini, from whom in general she withheld no secret, but in this instance, where the interest of another was concerned, she considered disguise justifiable.

Ernesto in the soliloquy he held with himself, deplored the baneful effects of jealousy, yet followed its dictates, meanly

listened to its whisperings; however, genuine affection and a high sense of honour in part triumphed; he revealed to Rosalia the discovery he had unwittingly made; the vindication she made, though calculated to dispel suspicion, produced an effect quite contrary; he became the more convinced, and her chagrin at his surmises was readily imputed to confusion at being detected. The next night he watched, and beheld what would have appeared confirmation to the most incredulous, have convinced a very sceptic.

Oh, appearance! too oft deceiving; it is thou that feedest your first-born suspicion. Nurtured by thee, the bantling gains strength, till in loud voice it accuses the most innocent; condemnation is pronounced, and should the anticipated sentence not take place, what can recompence the injured suf-

ferer for scoffs and taunts unmercifully bestowed? An honourable acquittal! Can that heal the wounds of a susceptible bosom? Can that stifle the sighs of recollection? Alas! no.

Senora Pedro, who during the pathetic scene had retired to speak to her attendants, and purposely prolonged her absence, now re-entered; she bestowed on Don Rameraz an enquiring look—it was a look of recognition. The don was her countryman; she felt a local glow; she had known Rameraz in happier hours; he was the friend of her father, and with pleasure claimed a renewal of that friendship he had honoured him with.

Though characters diametrically opposite, Rameraz knew how to pity the man whose weak judgment induced him to indulge in that which militated

against his own happiness, and marred every enjoyment; for as avarice is attended with continual anxiety, so the accumulation of wealth brings additional cares.

Pedro was never happy—possession itself could not make him so; in every individual he feared some invader of his property, and with midnight watchfulness, guarded his treasure—treasure unenjoyed by him; source of evil, from whence flowed the misery of his unfortunate child, and ultimately facilitated his own death.

The senora was prevailed upon to spend some time at the pallazzo, and her attendants returned to the villa, to signify her intention.

Diversification tended to enliven her otherwise drooping spirits, and the un-

feigned joy she beheld depicted on every countenance, calmed the tumult of her bosom, and she secretly acknowledged how highly culpable are those who, unhappy themselves, yield to an unsocial inclination, and become gloomy misanthropes.

Laurentini, delighted at the eclaircissement that had taken place, with rapture dwelt on the name of Montaldi. He was not the being appearance had represented him. Her bosom throbbed, her heart palpitated.

"He is not married," said she, mentally, as with the idea associated a thousand nameless feelings.

Imagination reverted to his letter; each sentence indeliby imprinted, received from her willing credence.

e seizure of Rosalia she imputed to

the malevolence of some secret enemy, who, full bent on his disgrace, had devised the scheme to sully his fair fame. Perhaps the unhappy Montaldi was also confined. She sighed, and breathed fervent prayers for his delivery.

The duca with his usual hospitality, regaled his friends with an elegant entertainment.

The sprightly Almanza, unclouded by care, displayed to advantage that vivacity which ever rendered him an agreeable companion.

Elvira and the donna with pleasure observed his gaiety, and the gentle Agatha withheld not her approbation; her sweet smiles filled him with ecstacy, they were assurances of love, and could not be disregarded by Alonzo. His

transport could only be equalled by that felt by Ernesto.

The young marchese from the lowest abyss of despair was now elevated to the height of bliss; Rosalia, whom he had believed lost to him for ever, was now restored, her affection unchanged, and her heart the same as when with sweet ingenuousness she confessed the passion mutual: now glowed his bosom with a similar throb.

The lovely object of his thoughts was likewise retracing a period to her for ever endeared. Memory brought back the vows of Ernesto, the unalterable constancy he swore was now pleasingly remembered, and the unfortunate interruption to their happiness considered as the very test, the very standard whereby it had been proved.

Laurentini and Rosalia re-united, together graced those scenes that had formerly afforded them amusement.

The most foremost in external congratulation, was the Marchese di Viralva. He professed to feel great pleasure at the restoration of Rosalia, warmly congratulated Ernesto on his approaching felicity, and expressed detestation of the author of his disappointment. Almerini returned his courtesy in a suitable manner, and Altidore, happy because he had succeeded in deceiving another, felt delighted.

His spirits were unusually elated, and conspired to heighten the festivity that prevailed, festivity however that he could not partake of, for when he cast his eyes on Rosalia and marked the expression of her countenance, then rose tumultuous passion in his breast. To

act the hypocrite he felt was difficult—most painful to conceal; inveterate hate, enmity, and every other evil combined to convert feigned pleasure into the most acute anguish.

"Must I behold this scene?" said he, mentally. "Mimic pleasure I cannot feel. This mockery is worse than death."

The duca, unacquainted with his sentiments, felt disposed to esteem the man who, erring once, had the humility to acknowledge his errors, for in such a light he viewed Viralva; but Altidore merited not such clemency, for with him, to cease from evil was only when that power was withheld.

The ways of peace he loved not—selfish and cruel, the happiness of another was lost in his own gratification.

The guests at the pallazzo formed a contrast so striking, that he could derive no pleasure from their society, and secretly disgusted, returned to the castello.

CHAP. XXII.

VIRALVA, if compelled to use restraint at the pallazzo, now gave free vent to his ill-humour. His pent up rage discharged itself on every unfortunate object whom power granted him dominion over.

Provoked and dissatisfied, even the exercise of tyranny had lost its charm. Gloomy and abstracted, he sullenly sat, and would, if possible, have forgot himself.

An imagination fertile in evil invention, at length offered him a resource. He paused; there was no alternative, and prudence urged his acceptance.

"Ye powers that militate against my peace, oh! teach me to bear with patience my disappointment. Marred and thwarted, my schemes have proved abortive. Can I support their destruction? Oh! Rosalia, whom once I loved, but now most cordially hate, must I behold your happiness—witness your union with young Almerini? Know, poor weak youth, to oppose my wishes, is to incur danger not easily shunned. But why menace, when each bold enterprize has been ignobly circumvented; but I'll not yield. What, though obsequious at my nod, submissive vassals lowly bend—what though the half-formed wish completion finds, and I restrain not this

haughty fair—what use to me, I say, are these? Rosalia unsubdued, derides my power—enjoys the devouring flame her charms have fed. Retract in time, presumptuous Ernesto. Shall you, unschooled by wisdom, boldly contend with Viralva, whom sage experience has taught to hide each varied passion of the soul—to disguise the feelings as they rise."

Listless and undecided, he took a lamp, and almost mechanically found himself before the prison-door of his captive.

He hesitated, not quite determined what to do.

While thus deliberating, a footstep startled him.

He quickly turned round to discover

who the intruder was, and beheld Theodore.

"Senor Marchese," said he, in a tone of amaze, "I did not think of meeting you."

He had proceeded, when Viralva haughtily checked him. "A truce with your thoughts. Am I to hear a vassal prate?—What are you doing at this hour?"

"Carrying, Senor Marchese, food to the prisoner."

"'Tis well; execute your errand, and away."

Directly Theodore flew to obey, for well acquainted with the arbitrary disposition of the marchese, he trembled to disobey him. This slave knew how to gain the

favour of his unworthy lord, but to him it was no task—inclination supplied him with the means. Each atrocious act found in Theodore a willing performer. Bowing submissive as he closed the prison-door, Viralva entered, and surveyed with brutal triumph, the wasted form of his victim.

A look of ineffable contempt marked those features he had hoped to find wan with care.

Confounded at the sight, he essayed to speak. Unfamiliar with the subject, he could not proceed; it was the language of sympathy, and Altidore was not conversant in it.

The feeble imitation excited a smile, such a one as bestows the strong mind unsubdued by misfortune at the base artifice of the villain who meanly strives

to hide the murderous dagger beneath the smooth accent of dissimulation.

Viralva repulsed, departed, wondering within himself, what magic spell had chained his tongue; awed he stood before his captive, nor dared to elevate that voice tremulous with coward fear.

"Mystery undefinable!" exclaimed he, as exasperated he reviewed his conduct. "Resistless power, virtue so called, sure 'tis policy to claim your protection; invulnerable to every ill, oh! happy he who chuses such a guide. This is the language of disappointment. Viralva by higher aim allured, shall watch the glad moment when withdrawn, your boasted votary falls beneath his nervous grasp; nor you, nor fate shall intervene. Why dormant justice slumber thus? The secret connivance aids

my plan; ambition animates this breast, fires my soul, and bids it soar to heights unequalled. Love taught this heart to feel its quenchless flame; indifference has damped, but cannot extinguish a fire that fiercer burns for being concealed. Rosalia, relentless maid, hitherto successful, the hour is now mine; I will teach you what it is to brave the passion of a hopeless man. I love her not," said he, indignantly; "once scorned, rejected, and proudly refused, no more I fondly doat. But there is a being in whose existence that of Rosalia is interwoven; and on whose smiles she happy lives; him will I snatch from her, separate him from the bliss she pants to confer, and revel in the pangs they'll madly feel."

So thought Viralva—these the malignant joys of his bad heart. Tormented by his own ungovernable pas-

sions, he required not severer punishment. Weak, inconsiderate mortal! recollect, that when disturbing the peace of another, your own is also sacrificed. There is no satisfaction in evil; it may boast of occupying the mind, but it confers not pleasure even to the most depraved. They seek self-gratification.—Mistaken idea! revenge is not calculated to bestow it. Hence arises that restless, persecuting spirit, in continual search of an object; hence springs inquietude and inbred contention, the bane of pleasure, and destroyer of harmony. Viralva envying the Almerini family, with jealous eyes contemplated their serenity.

The duca no longer disconsolate, shewed how a good man ought to spend his time; shewed how wealth ought to be employed, not in ostentatious acts of feigned benevolence—not occasionally generous, but uniformly so.

The peasantry he considered as his friends, not that he elevated them to that rank, but as friends they shared his wealth, and partook his care, for Almerini well knew that mediocrity best suits those who by Nature taught, alone can adorn the humble sphere; but he who acts the tyrant, abuses power, assaults the weak, and increases oppression, proves himself unfit for the station he dares to fulfil.

Laurentini never separate from Rosalia, by her inspired, breathed fresh life, regained her spirits, and became completely metamorphosed. The lilies assumed a lovelier hue, and the roses on her cheeks re-bloomed; her form, with the elasticity which pleasure alone can give, seemed improved in grace; no sighs heaved her lovely bosom—composed and calm, it was sweetly serene.

Montaldi vindicated, was the favoured object of her private thoughts.—Flattering distinction! But Montaldi knew it not; unconscious of the honor, sadly mourned, deplored his fate, and called it hard; yes, for Laurentini's sake he thought it so. Each noble impulse, by apathy chilled, love, powerful love called into action. That energy, by misfortune subdued, had ignobly yielded, or at best but feebly struggled, till charms like thine, fair Laurentini, rekindled the dormant spark—animated and inspired with nobler aim.

But fa[illegible] fell web too securely wove, entangled in inextricable maze the mysterious Florentine. A cheerless wanderer, bewildered in the labyrinth of misfortune, he pursued his listless way; no ray illumined his benighted path; forlorn of hope, he keenly suffered.

He reflected on his conduct toward Ernesto. "What must the marchese think? Too well I interpreted his scornful look; to disdain consigned, he adds another to the pangs of Montaldi. Had he acquainted Laurentini?"

He groaned—the thought was not endurable.

"She too, perhaps contemns me, scoffs at my name, or pronounces it with contempt. Ye cruel fiends, who hover constantly around my wretched steps, had you relaxed your watchful care, this tongue had made a feeble vindication, for much I prize Ernesto's esteem, much covet his good opinion."

Deceitful whispering! It was for Laurentini's sake he wished to clear his sullied fame, for her he penned the justifying letter. By passion softened,

no act he thought too difficult, so it could obtain for him his soul's first wish.

Rosalia heard his faltering tongue, in accent persuasive, fondly plead. Moved by the strain, she kindly offered all in her power, if aught could still the storm that raged within, for well she saw each ruffled feature, each dejected look, that but too plainly told his bosom's grief.

Montaldi became impassioned; honor was his aim. Could he be otherwise? "Yes, energy itself had failed, but for the auxiliary that lent you eloquence, love, potent orator, too well supplies each faithful votary with smooth, soft speech, with varied accent, and entreating look—look undefinable, that imparts warm from the heart, the half-formed wish, and conveys unutterable expression."

With eager expectation he awaited the promised answer, but doomed to severe disappointment, he beheld it not.

"He believes it a specious guise, a false gloss!—I'll bear my fate with patient resignation, nor seek to contend with a power invincible. Fatal disturbance! that broke upon my hitherto calm life; subservient I had meanly bowed to superior strength, but Laurentini first taught this heart to love, taught me to rebel. I strove to surmount my difficulties—what was my reward? Pain, anguish, and internal misery. Senor Bartolo, the ruthless hand that pierced your breast, aimed at my peace a deadlier blow; for then I beheld Laurentini, entranced contemplated her heavenly features, with awe surveyed her matchless grace. The worth of Ernesto next claimed my attention; admiring, I drew sad comparison, viewed the barrier that

stood between myself and happiness, for happiness I had surely found in the friendship you proffered me. I refused your offer: you called me stern, obdurate, inflexible, but you knew not the cause, or had applauded the observance, approved the sacrifice made to rigid honour. Ye sacred power that rules my soul, that bids tumultuous passion cease, to your dominion myself I yield. Prodigies by thee performed, appear as naught, or I had not so easily resigned Almerini's friendship."

The grey spires of an adjacent monastery, as they stole upon the view of Montaldi, beguiled him of a sigh. It was a comprehensive one; it included the whole fraternity.

"How many passions," exclaimed he, "agitate those bosoms religion ought to calm! There only restrained for want

of an object, vice hides its head concealed, but not departed, dormant waits till incident calls it into action. Many disgusted with mankind, seek to bury discontent beneath your sacred walls; but he only can religion sooth, whose mind submissive trusts to find unseen right in apparent wrong."

Thus had he spoke, when a solemn form issued from the sanctuary.

Montaldi halted to let him pass.

"Senor Montaldi!" exclaimed the voice, and proved to be Orsino.

A smile passed over the features of the Florentine, perhaps at the thoughts he had been indulging.

Orsino, in a transport of joy, pressed with fervour his hand. "I thought I

had done with pleasure," said he, emphatically, "but this emotion convinces me how deceitful were my hopes. Your welfare, senor, excites the warm interest of this breast—oh! may your happiness so lasting prove that it may defy time's self to destroy. As for myself," he continued, "all that is possible for me to enjoy, I found in the solacing reflection that it has pleased Heaven to save me from the commission of crimes that had barred my way to the forgiveness I still hope to obtain."

His impassioned energy bespoke the fullness of his heart.

"My more than preserver," said he, "for such allow me to call you, how much am I indebted to your virtue for the reformation of a life that had robbed me of man's highest privilege—reflection. You awoke me from my deli-

rium; I feel no want in yonder monastery, where I hope, by acts of piety, to atone past errors, and, oh! may Heaven accept my tribulation, and receive me finally to eternal rest."

"May the God of mercy hear your prayers," rejoined Montaldi.

The looks of Orsino spoke the thanks that language had but feebly expressed, for now he experienced the peaceful calm, the exquisite delight resulting from virtue.

"Senor," said he, "your example fired me with emulation. I beheld you bold, persevering, though surrounded by danger; I saw you nobly struggle with misfortune—saw you despise my fierce menace; your fortitude unshaken supported you to the last. Yours was no disposition unsocial, stern, inflexibly

stern; pliant, by pity moved, it yielded at the tale of Rosalia—to mitigate her sufferings, yourself had fell the victim. You know the rest."

"I do," replied Montaldi, in a solemn voice.

"Aroused by your conduct, my vocation disgusted me. My companions proved insipid, and listless I roved, but could find no relief; I attempted the arduous task of combating deep-rooted prejudice, and had the reward of disappointment. But the trial is over; the wealth I have so dishonourably amassed, is sufficient to procure me the necessaries of life. Remonstrance failed of converting men whose minds had become familiarized with guilt. With the best advice I left them to the quiet possession of their desolate abode."

"Have you never heard of Senora Albina?" enquired Montaldi.

"No," returned Orsino, "but her memory will disturb me no more, when secluded from all intercourse with the world."

"And must," said Montaldi, in a hesitating voice, "the hour that hails Orsino's return to virtue also witness his retirement from a world he was born to adorn? Has his knowledge of mankind induced him to fear the temptation that will every where encompass him? Believe me, your opinion is erroneous; seclusion is not the safeguard of virtue. Though it may prevent man from injuring his fellow man, because the object is placed beyond his reach, the passions nevertheless remain unsubdued. Alas! if these are your sentiments, your reformation is but imperfect. Return

then to a world you have strove to injure, and redress those injuries by a steady perseverance in the trials you will have to encounter with—trials that are the touchstone, the standard, whereby virtue alone can be appreciated. If you refuse, I shall ascribe your repentance to the momentary impulse of a despair that has left you forlorn indeed. Deprived of all happiness yourself, you cannot behold it in others without feeling a wish to prevent their enjoyment; but not virtually guilty, you fly with disgust from the sight of joy, as if inimical to your repose. Is such conduct worthy of him who has professed to renounce the errors of this life?"

Montaldi paused; he had spoken thus severely to effect the noblest of purposes, to effect a reconciliation with Orsino and himself, to support him in

that struggle he saw him maintaining, with his passions now militating against his best resolves.

At length he broke silence. "I will," said he, "abandon my resolution, and honor your advice by the reverence of adoption, in order to convince you that whatever praise-worthy act I am capable of performing, owes its origin to you."

"The Senor Orsino has spoke like himself," replied Montaldi. "For what temptation has he withstood who weakly places it beyond his reach? Return to the world—survey its inhabitants, their smiles, their tears—participate the one, banish the other, and forget in active benevolence your own unhappiness. The Senora Albina may in the end crown your sufferings; and should her mind, by conviction touched, prove

conscious of her failings, you would not, I am persuaded, withhold forgiveness."

Orsino sighed. "My heart," said he, "still loves her, but did it not, could I reproach? No, 'twould be perpetuating my own errors. Albina remembers me no more; the misfortunes of a father unjustly persecuted, has for ever obliterated my name from her memory. Don Pedro, selfish and unrelenting, no doubt influences her."

Orsino knew not that Pedro had long been dead, and that Albina, whose insensibility he deplored, was now with bitter compunction lamenting that single act which had fatally obscured life's cheerful day. Filled with regret, she thought of him who alone possessed her early affection; but remorse had

come too late—it could not restore to peace the unhappy Orsino.

Montaldi promised to call and see him, and they parted.

CHAP. XXIII.

THE Marchese Viralva with clouded aspect beheld the happiness that reigned throughout the pallazzo. He felt it contributed to his uneasiness, but he wished to appear pleased.

"What if I am not really so?" said he. "It is but to practice disguise, and the work is done."

What if the world believed him guiltless—that world for which he had sacrificed his favourite schemes? The heart of Altidore, in audible language, told

him he was not so Could he have deceived himself, then, then might he have gloried in deception, which could only deceive those whom it did not concern. Where the boasted powers of sophistry, where the efficacy of those subtle arguments that had vainly strove to give to truth the various interpretation? It extorted from him, as it must from all the lovers of artifice, the ingenuous confession that it is only themselves, and not mankind they injure, by appearing to the world what they are not; and however they may affect to treat virtue with contempt, they but the more firmly establish its glorious basis by the disguise they resort to, and the adoption of its outward semblance.

We seldom see the most abandoned openly glory in atrocity; self-consciousness gives to that virtue they contemn, the reward it will never fail of receiving,

even from the most dissolute. This was a truth, if not the tongue, the actions of Viralva bore witness to. How anxious he sought to impose on the duca, and to ingratiate himself in the good graces of Ernesto.

His was a disposition easily wrought on; amiable and generous, he withheld from none free communication, and his bosom's secret by these means became a divided trust.

But vain all the stratagems of Altidore; himself alone the sufferer, in secret mourned the annihilation of all his schemes.

With curious search he prepared to examine the rooms formerly occupied by the prisoner, in hopes to find some grounds for accusation. Already repenting of the liberty he had granted, but

nothing appeared, and Altidore compelled to desist, deplored the time so idly spent.

"Too cautious," said he, "to leave behind the smallest clue, he boldly thinks to frustrate my plans. Poor weak reasoner, soon shall your fairy visions vanish, and baseless leave no trace behind. The liberty I grant is but the name for deep design; the allotted time expired, more securely fettered, your captive form shall waste, shall pine confined within these dismal rooms. Obduracy itself removed, will lend you language to complain; passive you'll sue to that Viralva whose power you defied, whose unenjoyed wealth you scoffed at; where, boaster, those friends you so confidently talked of, they'll not deliver you." And the marchese smiled.—Unenviable sensation! it afforded him no satisfaction.

Every thing was now prepared for the departure of the Senora Pedro. She could not be prevailed on to stay any longer.

"If you are determined to leave us so soon," said Rosalia, on whose arm she was leaning, "I can only say you are very cruel. Did you not observe how your resolution displeased Don Rameraz?"

"You flatter me, senora; I highly esteem the don, but have weighty reasons that urge my departure."

"As weighty as caprice can make them," returned Rosalia, with a lively air; "but surely the persuasions of Agatha might have induced you to stay one single day—she will so soon become married."

"You know the promise I have made

the senora to be present on the happy occasion—a promise I shall faithfully observe; that and another are the only events capable of interesting me."

Rosalia blushed deeply at the allusion, and observing the senora looked grave, took the hint, and concluded a conversation she wished not to terminate unpleasant; for though their acquaintance was so recent, the impressive, but not obtruding melancholy of the senora imperceptibly won her esteem.

The self-obtained interest experienced a pleasing addition by the approval of Don Rameraz, who long had known the ancestors of Pedro. He, the last of that noble family, sullied the fair page of antiquity by an insatiable thirst for gain; but when contrasted, virtue and valorous deeds stood opposed to his single vice, the favourable balance preponderated.

Albina tenderly loved her father. What wonder if she became the willing follower of his plans? More than requited for her rejection of Orsino, she was through life a painful sufferer. Who could desire more? Stern justice pacified, beheld with pity the reproaches she self-inflicted. The misery she had entailed upon herself, misery that felt aggravated by consciousness, became the more acute when she called to mind the worth of Orsino—his generosity, his affection, and unmerited sufferings.

"And could I add to them?" said she, stifling a sigh.

It was not unheard by Rosalia; she pitied the utterer, and endeavoured to divert her attention.

Together they proceeded, when a

loud and piercing shriek called forth the solicitude of Rosalia.

The nearly sinking senora pronouncing the name of Isidor, soon revealed the cause of her alarm.

Orsino, for it was him, stood before her, and the unexpected sight had produced the effect already described.

Her fleeting senses restored, she contemplated him with a mixture of shame and confusion.

Rosalia, who wished not to disturb such an interview, unobserved stole away.

Albina and Isidor left to themselves, could not articulate a word. Too much engrossed by past events, they spared recrimination; and reconciled to each other, vowed to dedicate the remainder

of their lives in promoting the happiness they had mutually interrupted.

The persuasive arguments of Montaldi had not now been required to detain Isidor in a world he acknowledged had attractions for him, since Albina formed a part of it; and she, on her part, for a pleader less eloquent than Rosalia, consented to stay not only one day, but many more.

How artfully do we endeavour to persuade ourselves we have completely eradicated a darling passion, when at the moment most exultant, circumstance shows us how weak the boast?

This was the confession of Isidor, as he repeated to himself the words of Montaldi.

With the utmost speed he met that

friend, imparted to him his consummate bliss, and found it augmented by participation.

Montaldi warmly congratulated him; his words spontaneous flowed. They were not the studied language of disguise, the well couched phrase that pleases the ear, but affects not the heart.

Orsino, the robber, he considered a superior being; but his story told, and unmerited injury alledged in extenuation of error, awakened in the bosom of Montaldi the glow of pity. That glow by contrition encreased, obtained for Orsino his zealous friendship; and now that he found his repentance crowned with happiness, he could not but behold it with pleasure.

The silence of Rosalia was well ac-

counted for. "Fatal coincidence!" said he. "Perhaps they suspected me—imputed her flight to my contrivance. Did Laurentini accuse me? No, I will not think so; in blissful ignorance let me remain. To forfeit her good opinion is to make me miserable. Hope inspires me; Rosalia no doubt will plead my cause. Admitted to the friendship of Ernesto, occasionally I may be blest with a sight of Laurentini. A sight did I say? And must I be indulged with no more? Lie still, aspiring wishes; let reason whisper what I am—a doubtful character, of dubious reputation, unknown, unhonoured. Dare I presume to address nobility? What towering thoughts!—romantic idea! And yet the delusion charms away real care. Shall I dispel it? No, precious amulet, I'll bind thee round my heart, oh! quell each throb, and teach it composure."

Ernesto and Alonzo, divested of all anxiety, smiled at those ills they had thought irremediable.

"Who could that mysterious stranger be," said Almanza, "who insidiously betrayed the confidence I reposed in him?"

"It is more than I can tell," replied Ernesto; "the words you informed me Caprana spoke, were strange."

"Most strange."

"He seemed acquainted with your enemy?"

"Yes," said Alonzo; "an oath prevented him from telling me who he was. Would I had known, this arm should have repaid his treachery."

"And you cannot describe the spot."

"Impossible, my friend; my eyes could not assist me; I was blindfolded and could not make the least observation. My deliverance equally surprising, I cannot account for, unless it owed its origin to the flight of the Senor Nicolo. Caprana, impelled by fear, perhaps caused me thus mysteriously to be liberated; unless the zeal of Nicolo performed the act, which at times I am inclined to think."

"Alonzo once related to me the narrative of that stranger."

The betrayal was unguardedly made. "Ernesto, I know your integrity, you will not urge me when I tell you my honour is plighted to conceal his story."

"Enough," replied Almerini; his

countenance testifying how much he admired his friend's forbearance.

Nicolo, after his enlargement, suffered inconceivable hardships, till he supposed the pursuit over. With fearful caution at length he ventured, expecting to find in every person that accosted him, some potent enemy.

The alteration his person had undergone, and the difference of dress, aided his disguise.

"Viralva would not know me," said he, with self-complacency. This arm, considered powerless, shall guide the blow that falls the more heavy for being unexpected. Oh, Altidore! could I but make you suffer as many days of misery as I endured, count o'er as many weary nights, I would most freely forgive you; not merely by word, but in verity. Let

me but be thy goaler, raise to your lips the bitter draught, and I'm content. This hand shall present the measured morsel—quick turn the lock that shuts you out from sweet liberty; exultant I depart, and add the horrors of uncertainty to your fate. As many years as forlorn I lingered, so shall you, and when the allotted period is expired, clasp you to my breast, and as a brother, pardon. What matters if concealed tears witness your confinement? Unconscious, they'll not cheer you. My pangs excited your triumph; I promise not a similar return, though I'll force this coward nature externally to imitate you. For this I lived, for this I survived the foul disgrace you heaped on me; unmoved heard a parent's curse! Now, base villain! defeated by your own vile schemes, you have fell in the snare you laid for another."

Relieved by this rhapsody, the unfortunate Nicolo seated himself on a bank that graced a gentle flowing river; the calm smooth waters meandering along, seemed sporting with the sunbeams that played on their surface.

Nicolo contemplated the variegated colours, and felt himself invigorated by the genial ray. The salutary breeze bid each discordant passion cease.

There is a something in the weather that imparts congeniality to the sentiments. The sky serene and beautiful, seemed to whisper peace to all Nature. Nicolo blushed at the subject that engrossed his thoughts, but he was a philosopher, and would not recant.

"'Tis misapplied mercy to screen a villain—spare the offender, and the offence becomes extended. Perchance

the innocent may suffer from the mistaken lenity—I will not recede."

So saying, he quitted his situation, and pursued his way, nor stopped one moment, save when he paused to deliberate how he should proceed.

Viralva was powerful; he unassisted: were he to make himself known in order to regain his patrimony, such a step might reach the ears of Altidore, and warn him of his danger; this was what he wished to prevent. The fears of Caprana his best security, he trusted to them for the concealment of his escape, and resolved to suffer every hardship rather than run the risk of a discovery.

A determination once made, he no longer wavered: firm and unchangeable, his fortitude was unshaken; nor would

Nicolo, though surrounded by every ill, have relinquished his design.

"Tremble, Viralva! the day of your power is gone—the bright sun of splendour is set; obscuring night awaits you. Behold and tremble ere you are involved.

"But the warning is vain, Viralva had not listened though ten thousand tongues had spoke of his danger: he who listens not to conscience, hears not the voice of humanity, and stifles all feeling, will rarely be found attending to any thing. Go on your career, infatuated being! Intoxicated with success, how great his fall, who, self-elevated, mocks all caution, and boasting ascends the stupendous height! Know then, marchese, the meanest of your enemies—the most despised aims a blow too well directed at your greatness—it totters; it

falls to rise no more. Mourn over the ruins—view the sad wreck—it is Manfredoni's deed."

Unappeased, the injured Manfredoni wandered about his enemy's dwelling; the spot by recollection dear, witnessed his sighs, received the humid tear, for there it loved to fall, it loved to moisten Almeria's grave; fraternal grief discharged itself, vented its plaint, but not exhausted, still yielded the sacred drop of gratitude, paid the just tribute to unequalled worth, and to the memory of Lorenzo Viralva, consecrated the sigh of regret, recounted his virtues, and in liquid sorrow repeated his praise; his wife, Torrini's beauteous daughter, beside him lay; fond pledge of love, the youthful Lorenzo an early victim fell, sacrificed to death's resistless power.

With averted eyes Manfredoni turned

from the affecting sight, for fondly he had hoped the youth so promising had inherited his father's virtues, and like that father, would transmit to posterity a name unsullied, support the honour of his illustrious ancestors. Well pleased he saw each dawning grace, marked the calm passions as they serenely moved, and anticipated what he saw not realized. Death plucked the blossom, and the cheerful dawn o'ercast—Lorenzo died; Altidore assumed the title of Marchese, and the disconsolate Manfredoni was deprived of all resource, save the melancholy one he sought in frequenting the tomb of all in life he most valued.

In the chapel belonging to the castello he passed many a solitary hour; acquainted with the secret communication, he could indulge himself without the permission of Viralva. His

sight obnoxious, recalled past events to his memory, and with renewed pang, lacerated his bosom; the castello itself he avoided as a memento of his woe, nor ever passed that way but through inadvertence.

When one day the depth of thought beguiled him to pass the very gates, he started, for his eyes beheld a being whom he had believed numbered with the dead; they addressed each other, for a mutual recognition took place.

"'Tis as I surmised," said Manfredoni, "you were not dead."

A pause of some moments ensued, the souls communicated, congenial sympathy imparted each thought, and spared all other definition—it was unnecessary.

The transport of Manfredoni may be

imagined, but it cannot be described; excessive joy disabled him from speaking, and they parted to concert measures.

With hurried steps he measured back his way; he entered the cottage where he had taken up his abode since his removal from the castello—it was contiguous.

With agitation he traversed the limited boundaries of the room. How could he without the tedious procrastination of the law, do justice to the injured? Stratagem must be practised, and deception equalled by deception. He was perplexed in what manner to act; he revolved in his mind the occurrences as they had happened in succession.

Distracted by a variety of thoughts, he threw himself on the bed, endeavouring by repose to banish retrospection,

but sleep closed not his eyes, neither could he find a cessation from pain the whole of the next day.

Benigma, the widow in whose cottage he resided, observed his emotion, and tried each soothing art to dispel his melancholy.

Manfredoni, not insensible to her assiduous care, constrained himself to appear composed, but the effort was a painful one; contending passions raised a storm in his bosom not easily stilled.

Toward the close of evening, Benigma entered the room where he was sitting, with an air of importance that excited his notice.

"What has happened?" he enquired.

"Nothing material, senor, save that a stranger is in the room below; he said he was so much fatigued, and so tired, that I could not find it in my heart to refuse him. I sat before him some refreshment, of which he greedily partook; he has been travelling a great way no doubt by the disorder of his clothes, but seems quite disguised, or afraid of something, for when I look at him (which the Virgin knows one may do without any meaning,) he turns his head aside, and casts down his eyes. Now I wish to my heart, senor, you could see him."

"How can that be done without my appearing inquisitive?"

The kind-hearted widow was indeed at a loss, for she wished not to satisfy her curiosity at the expence of another's feelings. "And yet," thought she,

"where is the harm for the senor just to take a peep?"

"I would not willingly wrong any one," said she, by way of preface, "but suppose, senor, that is, if it meets with your approbation, I was to return to the room, and you come presently and ask me for the key of your chamber, as if I had taken it up in a mistake; while I am pretending to recollect myself, you can look at the stranger."

The artifice was an innocent one, and Manfredoni consented to it.

Away flew Benigma, delighted with the ingenuity of her contrivance; and agreeable to her wish, Manfredoni soon followed.

The stranger, on his entrance, averted his head.

Manfredoni advanced toward the table, at which he was pensively sitting, with one hand drawn across his eyes; but Manfredoni had seen enough, had seen sufficient to recognize the Senor Nicolo, who, with equal surprise, astonishment, and joy, accosted him.

The widow, delighted at a conclusion so little expected, left the long estranged friends to enjoy a meeting doubly endeared to both.

Much time had elapsed in asking and answering questions uninteresting of themselves, but important to them.

"And is it thus I behold the Senor Nicolo!" at length said Manfredoni, with a solemn pause. "But the pleasure I feel at seeing you again lessens my regret at your deplorable situation."

Nicolo then related his misfortunes, and the treachery of Viralva.

" Monster of depravity !" exclaimed Manfredoni, with suppressed indignation, " A similar villain was Morano ; he impressed the comte, your father, with a belief of your unworthiness, he considered you as a profligate, forgetful of every tie, and your fatal silence established the unfavourable opinion."

Nicolo groaned, as with fearful apprehension he enquired whether his father was living.

" No," replied Manfredoni ; " he has been dead some time ago, and the Senor Marascotti, your cousin, invested with his ample fortune ; but only in trust, though from circumstances the comte feared he would never be called upon.

"Oh, Altidore! perfidious wretch!" exclaimed Nicolo, with energy. "Can I forget the injuries you have done me?"

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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